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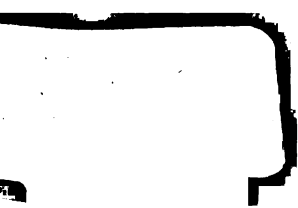

TRANSLATION

OF

THE LETTERS

OF A

HINDOO RAJAH.

TRANSLATION

OF

THE LETTERS

OF A

HINDOO RAJAH;

WRITTEN

PREVIOUS TO, AND DURING THE PERIOD OF HIS RESIDENCE IN ENGLAND.

To which is prefixed a

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION

ON THE

HISTORY, RELIGION, AND MANNERS,

OF

THE HINDOOS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY ELIZA HAMILTON.

VOLUME I.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY WELLS AND LILLY.

1819.

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TO

WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.

Late Governour General of Bengal,

UNDER WHOSE AUSPICES,

AS THE DISTINGUISHED PATRON OF SHANSCRIT AND PERSIAN LITERATURE,

THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE ORIENTAL TRANSLATIONS HAVE HITHERTO APPEARED.

TO HIM,

AS THE HONOURED PATRON AND FRIEND OF A BELOVED AND MUCH LAMENTED BROTHER,

IS THIS TRIFLE,

(AS A SINCERE THOUGH HUMBLE TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE)

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS MUCH OBLIGED,

AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

London, June 6, 1796.

31X653

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

In the extensive plan which is carried on under the direction of the great Governour of the Universe, an attentive observer will frequently perceive the most unexpected ends accomplished by means the most improbable, and events branch outin to effects, which were neither foreseen, nor intended by the agents which produced them. A slight view of the consequences which have hitherto resulted from our intercourse with the East-Indies, will sufficiently evince the truth of this assertion.

The thirst of conquest and the desire of gain, which first drew the attention of the most powerful and enlightened nations of Europe toward the fruitful regions of Hin-

dostan, have been the means of opening sources of knowledge and information to the learned and the curious, and have added to the stock of the literary world, treasures, which, if not so substantial, are of a nature more permanent than those which have enriched the commercial.

The many elegant translations from the different Oriental languages, with which the world has been favoured within these last few years, have not failed to attract merited attention; and the curiosity awakened by these productions, concerning the people with whom they originated, has been gratified by the labours of men who have enjoyed the first rank in literary fame.

Still, however, the writers in every branch of Oriental literature have to contend with disadvantages too numerous and too powerful to be easily overcome. The names of the Heroes of Greece and Rome are rendered familiar at a period of life when the mind receives every impression with facility, and tenaciously retains the impressions it re-

ceivés. With the name of every Hero the idea of his character is associated, and the whole becomes afterwards so connected in the mind with the blissful period of life at which it was first received, that the recollected scenes of juvenile felicity may frequently, even in the most accomplished minds, be found to give a zest to the charms of the ancient authors. To those who have not had the advantages of an early classical education, the same objections which render the translations from the Oriental writers tiresome and uninteresting, will operate with equal force on the most beautiful passages of Homer, or Virgil; and the names of Glaucus and Sarpedon, of Anchises and Eneas, be found as hard to remember, and as difficult to pronounce, as those of Krishna and Arjoun.

Of these advantages, resulting from early prepossessions, the Persian and Hindoo writers are entirely destitute, and the difficulty of reconciling the sounds of the names of their Heroes to an European ear is so great,

that it is not till after a greater degree of attention than the generality of readers will bestow, that any appropriate idea of them can be fixed in the mind. This appears to be at least one cause of that ignorance and apathetick indifference with regard to the affairs of the East, which is frequently to be remarked in minds that are in every other respect highly cultivated and accurately informed. For the sake of readers of this description, particularly those of my own sex, who may have been deterred by reasons above hinted at from seeking information from a more copious source, I think it necessary toward explaining many passages in the letters of the Rajah, which would otherwise have appeared utterly unintelligible, to give a short and simple sketch of the history of the nation to which they belonged. Should my feeble effort lead to further enquiry; should it in the mind of any person of taste give birth to a laudable curiosity upon a subject where so much is to be learned, my design will be still more fully an-

swered, and my wishes more completely fulfilled.

That part of Asia known to Europeans by the name of Hindostan, extends from the mountains of Thibet on the North to the sea on the South, and from the river Indus on the West to the Barampooter on the East, comprehending within its limits a variety of provinces, many of which have been famous, from the earliest ages, for the salubrity of their climate, the richness of their productions, and the fertility of their soil. Of this country, the Hindoos* are the

* The word *Hind*, from whence *Hindoo*, and Hindostan, or country of the Hindoos, is of Persian origin, computed by Colonel Dow to have been derived from Hind, a supposed son of Ham, the son of Noah; and by other Orientalists, to owe its origin to the river Indus. For the sake of such as take pleasure in tracing etymologies, I insert a note written on the margin of the copy of Gentoo Laws, now in my possession, by one whose knowledge of the Persian language has not been excelled by any. He says, 'The word *Hind* is often used by the Persian Poets to signify *Black* or *dark-coloured*, and it is probable that *Hindos* may mean no more than a *black man*, as our negro from *Niger*.'

Aborigines. Over the origin of this celebrated people, Time has cast the impenetrable mantle of oblivion. Their own annals trace it back to a period so remote, so far beyond the date of European Chronology, as to be rejected by European pride. The magnificent proofs of ancient grandeur, however, which are still to be found, and which have been sought for with the most successful assiduity by many of our countrymen in India, give the most irrefragable testimony of the antiquity of their empire, and seem to confirm the assertion of its Historians, 'that its duration is not to be paralelled by the history of any other portion of the human race.' To account for this extraordinary degree of permanency, we must direct our attention, not to the barriers formed by nature around their territories, but to those internal causes arising from the *nature of their Government*, *their Laws*, *Religion*, *moral Prejudices*, and established m[illegible]efs.

The ancient government, t[illegible]oughout Hindostan, appears to have been a federative union of the various states, each go-

verned by its own Rajah, or Chief, but subjected, in a sort of feudal vassalage, to the sovereignty of the supreme Emperour, who was head of the whole.

The manner in which the Rajahs of the Hindoos exercised the rights of dominion over their people, bears so little analogy to that practised by the petty sovereigns of such European states as are placed in circumstances nearly similar, that it would be doing the greatest injustice to the amiable and benevolent character of the Hindoos, to bring them into comparison. *There* the right of sovereignty bore the mild aspect of parental authority. The Prince considered the people in the light of children, whom he was appointed by Heaven to protect and cherish; and the affection of the subject for the Prince, under whose auspices he enjoyed the blessings of freedom and tranquillity, was heightened by esteem for his virtues into the most inviolable attachment.*

* The descriptions of the Poet may sometimes be called in to justify and illustrate the assertions of the Historian.

ed in the following passage of the Bhagvat Geeta, an episode, from their great epick poem, translated into English by Mr. Wilkins.

'The natural duty of the Bramin is peace, self-restraint, patience, rectitude, wisdom, and learning. The natural duties of the Khettrie, are bravery, glory, not to flee from the field; rectitude, generosity, and princely conduct. The natural duties of the Bice are to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle, and to buy and sell. The natural duties of the Sooder is servitude; a man by following the duties appointed by his birth, cannot do wrong. *A man being contented with his own particular situation obtaineth perfection.*'

Though all Bramins are not Priests, none but such as are of this Cast can perform any offices of the priestly function. The members of every other Cast preserve for theirs the most respectful veneration, and a spirit of partiality toward them seems

to breathe throughout their laws, as well as religious institutions.

Those who take pleasure in pointing the shafts of sarcasm against the order of the Priesthood (without considering that invectives against any society of individuals are only satires upon human nature) will readily assign to the Bramins themselves, the formation of laws which appear so favourable to their interests, and produce it as an additional proof of priestly cunning and ambition; but a moment's reflection on the duties, as well as privileges, of this Cast, will put an end to invidious exultation.

An abhorrence of the shedding of blood, is a principle which pervades the whole of the Hindoo religion, but the Bramins observe it in the strictest degree. They eat nothing that has life in it: their food consisting entirely of fruit and vegetables; their only luxury being the milk of the Cow, an animal for whose species they have a particular veneration. Not only every act of hostility, but even every me-

thod of defence is, to them, strictly prohibited; submitting to violence with unresisting patience and humility, they leave it to God, and their Rajahs, to avenge whatever injuries they may sustain.

The separation of the different Casts from each other is absolute and irreversible; it forms the fundamental principle of their laws, and the slightest breach of it never fails to incur universal reprobation.

Thus those sources of disquiet, which have held most of the empires of the earth in a state of perpetual agitation, were unknown to the peaceful children of Brahma. The turbulence of ambition, the emulations of envy, and the murmurs of discontent, were equally unknown to a people, where each individual, following the occupation, and walking in the steps of his fathers, considered it as his primary duty to keep in the situation that he firmly believed to have been marked out for him by the hand of Providence.

In the spirit of the religion of the Hindoos, a still more efficient cause of the durability of their state presents itself to our view. Original in its nature, and absolute in its decrees, its precepts induce a total seclusion from the rest of mankind. Far, however, from disturbing those who are of a different faith, by endeavours to convert them, it does not even admit of proselytes to its own. Though tenacious of their own doctrines in a degree that is unexampled in the history of any other religion, the most fervent zeal in the most pious Hindoos leads them neither to hate, nor despise, nor pity such as are of a different belief, nor does it suffer them to consider others as less favoured by the Almighty than themselves. This spirit of unbounded toleration proceeded in a natural course from the sublime and exalted notions of the Deity, taught by the Bramins and every where to be met with in their writings, and which are only equalled in that Gospel 'which brought life and immortality to light.'

That Being whom they distinguish by the different appellations of the Principle of Truth! the Spirit of Wisdom! the Supreme! by whom the Universe was spread abroad, whose perfections none can grasp within the limited circle of human ideas, views, they say, with equal complacency, all who are studious to perform his will throughout the immense family of creation. They deem it derogatory to the character of this Being, to say that he prefers one religion to another, 'to suppose such preference being the height of impiety, as it would be supposing injustice toward those whom he left ignorant of his will:' and they therefore conclude that every religion is peculiarly adapted to the country and people where it is practised.* The Bramins, who compiled the Code of Gentoo Laws, translated by Mr. Halhed, explain their opinion upon this subject in very explicit terms: 'the truly intelligent (say they) well know, that the differences and varieties of

* See Crawford's Sketches.

created things are a ray of his glorious essence, and that the contrarieties of constitutions are types of his wonderful attributes. He appointed to each Tribe its own faith, and to every Sect its own religion, and views, in each particular place, the mode of worship respectively appointed it. Sometimes he is employed, with the attendants upon the Mosque, in counting the sacred beads; sometimes he is in the Temple at the adoration of idols, the intimate of the Mussulman, and the friend of the Hindoo, the companion of the Christian, and the confidant of the Jew.'

A toleration founded upon such systematick principles, would necessarily exclude those argumentative disputations, those cruel and obstinate animosities, which, alas! under a dispensation whose very essence is benevolence, have so often disturbed the peace of society. There the acrimonious censure, the keen retort, the vehement invective against those who differed in opinion, was totally unknown. Under the

banners of their religion, the irascible passions were never ranged. 'He, my servant,' says Krishna, speaking in the person of the Deity, 'He, my servant, is dear to me, who is *free from enmity*, merciful, and exempt from pride and selfishness, and who is the same in pain and in pleasure, patient of wrongs, contented, and whose mind is fixed on me alone.'

I shall conclude this account of the notions of the Deity entertained by the Hindoos, with the first stanza of that beautiful Hymn to Narrayána, or the Spirit of God exerted in Creation, translated by the elegant pen of Sir William Jones.

'Spirit of Spirits! who, through every part
Of space expanded and of endless time,
Beyond the stretch of lab'ring thought sublime,
Bad'st uproar into beauteous order start,
Before Heaven was, Thou art:
Ere spheres beneath us roll'd or spheres above,
Ere Earth in firmamental ether hung,
Thou sat'st alone, till through thy mystick love
Things unexisting to existence sprung,
And grateful descant sung.
What first impell'd Thee to exert thy might?

Goodness unlimited.—What glorious light
Thy powers directed? Wisdom without bound.
What prov'd it first? Oh! guide my fancy right,
Oh! raise from cumb'rous ground
My soul, in rapture drown'd,
That fearless it may soar on wings of fire;
For Thou, who only knowst, Thou only can'st inspire."

A further view of their religious system may be necessary, and will, perhaps be sufficient to elucidate another characteristick feature of the Hindoos, which has forcibly struck all who have had an opportunity of observing them. The patience evinced by this mild and gentle race under the severest suffering, and the indifference with which they view the approach of death, which has been severally assigned to constitutional apathy, to their mode of living, and to the delicate texture of their bodies, may perhaps be equally accounted for from their firm and stedfast belief in a future state. This belief, indeed, is darkened by many errours. They believe that the human soul must be purified by suffering, and that it is not till after having undergone this expia-

tory discipline through a series of different bodies, that it becomes worthy of admission to eternal happiness. The evil inflicted upon the seemingly inoffensive, is attributed by them as a punishment for crimes committed in a pre-existent state. Revolting from the idea of eternal punishment, as incompatible with the justice and goodness of their Creator, they believe that the souls of the wicked, after having been for a time confined in Narekha (the infernal regions) are sent back upon the stage of life, to animate the bodies of the inferiour creation, till by various chastisements and transmigrations in these probationary states, every vicious inclination is sufficiently corrected to admit of their reception into the regions of perfection and happiness. 'Animated by the desire of obtaining that final boon,' says a late Historian,* 'and fired by all the glorious promises of their religion, the patient Hindoo smiles amid unutterable mise-

* See Maurice's Antiquities.

ry, and exults in every dire variety of voluntary torture.'

Notwithstanding the sublime notions of the Hindoo concerning Deity, and notwithstanding the strenuous assertions of the best informed Bramins even at the present day, that their worship is only directed to one divine essence, and that the many inferiour deities, whose images fill their temples, are but so many emblems of his different attributes, it must be confessed, that the religion of the vulgar has degenerated into the grossest idolatry. This may be accounted for by the jealous care with which the tribe of Brahma prevented the intrusion of the multitude into those avenues to science and to truth, of which they were the peculiar guardians.* Ignorance naturally leads to superstition, and the vulgar of all ranks, fixing their attention on the external object that is presented to them, lose sight of the more remote and spiritual allusion, and soon transfer that veneration to the symbol, which was at

* See Introduction to the Gentoo Laws.

first meant only to be excited for the thing signified. Nor is it in the religion of Hindostan alone, that similar effects are produced by causes of a like nature.

To enter upon the disquisition of a subject so extensive and so intricate as that of Hindoo Mythology, would be to wander far from the purpose of the present Introduction: such an idea of it, however, as may serve to elucidate some passages in the Letters of the Rajah, which allude to their divinities, may be deemed neither unnecessary nor impertinent.

The first thing that presents itself to our view is the Triad of Deity, Brimha, Veeshna, and Seeva, under which form is represented the three great attributes of the Almighty—Power to create, Goodness to preserve, and Justice to punish. The long list of the inferiour Deities, which follow, exhibit such a striking similitude in their character and offices to the ancient Gods of Greece and Rome, that it has led to a conjecture of their being actually the same, and an attempt

has been made by a writer of equal taste and erudition, to prove their identity, and to trace their wanderings through the mazes of Grecian and Egyptian lore. Of the members of this numerous Pantheon, it will be sufficient for our purpose to mention the few following.

The first in rank is Ganesa, the God of Wisdom, who is thought to be the Janus of the Grecian Mythology; Carticeya, the God of War, whose prowess is not inferiour to that of the Mars of Rome. Seraswattee, the Goddess of Letters, and Protectress of Arts and Sciences, whose insignia, the Palmyra Leaf and the Reed or Pen (implements used in writing) are surely more appropriate to her character than the Shield and Lance, which graced the Minerva of the Greeks. Cama, or the God of Love, is said, by Sir William Jones, to be the twin brother of the Grecian Cupid, with richer and more lively appendages. And, indeed, if we form our notions of this fabulous divinity from the beautiful Ode addressed to him by an ancient

Hindoo bard, we must confess his superiority to be very evident.* And, lastly Surraya, or the God of Day, who, in his chariot, drawn by seven green horses, bears so near

* Hymn to Camdeo ; translated by Sir William Jones. "The God, to whom tho following poem is addressed, appears the same with the Grecian *Eros* and the Roman *Cupido* ; but the *Indian* description of his person and arms, his family, attendants, and attributes, has new and peculiar beauties. His bow of sugar-cane or flowers, with a string of bees, and his *five* arrows, each pointed with an *Indian* blossom of a heating quality, are allegories equally new and beautiful."

THE HYMN.

What potent God from *Agra*'s orient bow'rs
Floats thro' the lucid air, while living flow'rs
With sunny twine the vocal arbours wreathe,
And gales enamour'd heav'nly fragrance breathe ?
Hail pow'r unknown ! for at thy beck
Vales and groves their bosoms deck,
And ev'ry laughing blossom dresses
With gems of dew his musky tresses.
I feel, I feel thy genial flame divine,
And hallow thee, and kiss thy shrine.

a resemblance to Apollo, that it is impossible not to recognise them as the same.

'Know'st thou not me?' celestial sounds I hear!
'Know'st thou not me?' Ah, spare a mortal ear!
'Behold'—my swimming eyes entranc'd I raise,
But oh! they shrink before th' excessive blaze.
Yes, son of *Maya*, yes, I know
Thy blooming shafts and cany bow,
Cheeks with youthful glory beaming,
Locks in braids etherial streaming,
Thy scaly standard, thy mysterious arms,
And all thy pains and all thy charms.

God of each lovely sight, each lovely sound,
Soul-kindling, world-inflaming, starry crown'd,
Eternal *Cama!* Or doth *Smara* bright,
Or proud *Ananga* give thee more delight?
Whate'er thy seat, whate'er thy name,
Seas, earth, and air thy name proclaim;
Wreathy smiles and roseate pleasures,
Are thy richest, sweetest treasures,
All animals to thee their tribute bring,
And hail thee universal king.

Thy consort mild, *Affection* ever true,
Graces thy side, her vest of glowing hue,
And in her train twelve blooming girls advance,
Touch golden strings, and knit the mirthful dance.

These will serve to give the reader some idea of the numerous divinities whose images

Thy dreaded implements they bear,
And wave them in the scented air,
Each with pearls her neck adorning,
Brighter than the tears of morning.
Thy crimson ensign which before them flies,
Decks with new stars the sapphire skies.

God of the flow'ry shafts, and flow'ry bow,
Delight of all above and all below!
Thy lov'd companion, constant from his birth,
In heav'n clep'd *Bessent*, and gay *Spring* on earth,
Weaves thy green robe and flaunting bow'rs,
And from thy clouds draws balmy show'rs,
He with fresh arrows fills thy quiver,
(Sweet the gift, and sweet the giver!)
And bids the many-plumed warbling throng
Burst the pent blossoms with their song.

He bends the luscious cane, and twists the string
With bees, how sweet! but ah, how keen their sting!
He with five flow'rets tips the ruthless darts,
Which thro' five senses pierce enraptur'd hearts:
Strong *Chumpa*, rich in od'rous gold,
Warm *Amer*, nurs'd in heav'nly mould,
Dry *Nagkeser*, in silver smiling,
Hot *Kiticum*, our sense beguiling;
And last, to kindle fierce the scorching flame,
Loveshafts which Gods bright *Bela* name.

are worshipped in the temples of the Hindoos, and to whose honour festivals are celebrated, and votive offerings of fruits and flowers are presented.

The peculiar construction of the Hindoo government, and the precepts of Hindoo faith, though admirably calculated for the

Can men resist thy pow'r, when *Krishen* yields;
Krishen, who still in *Matra*'s holy fields
Tunes harps immortal, and to strains divine
Dances by moonlight with the *Gopia* nine?
But when thy daring arm untam'd,
At *Mahadeo* a loveshaft aimed,
Heav'n shook, and, smit with stony wonder,
Told his deep dread in bursts of thunder,
While on thy beauteous limbs an azure fire,
Blaz'd forth, which never must expire.

O thou for ages born, yet ever young,
For ages may thy *Bramin*'s lay be sung!
And when thy lory spreads his em'rald wings
To waft thee high above the tow'rs of kings;
While o'er thy throne the moon's pale light,
Pours her soft radiance thro' the night,
And to each floating cloud discovers,
The haunts of blest or joyless lovers,
Thy mildest influence to thy bard impart,
To warm, but not consume, his heart.

preservation of their empire in happiness and tranquillity, were not so favourable to the cultivation of the mind, and to its advancement in the paths of useful knowledge.

To expand the faculties of the human soul the passions must be called into action, nor can any of these be laid under such restraint as dooms them to lie for ever dormant, without injuring the powers of the mind.

In the struggle of contending interests, though peace is sometimes lost, intellectual energy is roused, and while the strife of emulation and the restlessness of ambition disturb the quiet of society, they produce, in their collision, the genius that adorns it: it is accordingly pronounced, by one who must be allowed competent to the decision, that 'Reason and Taste are the grand prerogatives of European minds, while the Asiaticks have soared to loftier heights in the sphere of Imagination.'*

* See Asiatick Researches, vol. 1.

But notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which they laboured, the many monuments that yet remain of their former splendour, the specimens of their literature, and the productions of their manufactures, sufficiently evince their advancement in the sciences which dignify life, as well as in the arts that ornament it.

The Bramins, to whom the cultivation of science was exclusively committed, seem to have made no contemptible use of their high privilege. In astronomy they are allowed to have excelled; many works of their ancient writers on metaphysicks, and ethicks, have already come to our knowledge; and, surely, no lover of poetry can peruse the specimens of that divine art, which have been presented to the publick in an English dress, without feeling a desire to be more intimately acquainted with the productions of the Hindoo bards.

The degree of knowledge we already possess concerning the antiquities of Hindostan, has not been attained without ef-

forts of the most indefatigable assiduity. But what obstacles are sufficient to deter the spirit of literary curiosity? When supported by philosophy, and guided by taste, it seldom fails to subdue every difficulty, and to see its persevering labours crowned with success!

How much this observation has been verified in respect to the Asiatick Society, is well known to all who have perused the volumes of their Researches. It is thus briefly described by Mr. Maurice, in the Introduction to his Indian Antiquities. 'The buried tablet has been dug from the bowels of the earth; the fallen and mouldering pillar has been reared; coins and medals, struck in commemoration of grand and important events, have been recovered from the sepulchral darkness of two thousand years; and the obsolete characters, engraved on their superficies, have, with immense toil, been decyphered and explained.'

In the contemplation of these scientifick labours, the Governour General, under

whose auspices they were commenced, will have the deserved meed of grateful acknowledgment from every candid and philosophick mind; for although he declined complying with the wishes of the members, who were all solicitous to see him at the head of their society, he was eminently instrumental in promoting its success; and in this, as in every other instance, he stood forth the steady friend, the liberal patron, and zealous promoter of useful knowledge.

How much the world has been indebted to the learned Gentleman who was nominated to the Presidentship of the Society, is too well known to require animadversion. Long and deeply will his loss be deplored by every lover of literature and friend to virtue.

A few of the original members of the Asiatick Society* still continue to pursue

* The names of the original members of the Asiatick Society were as follows:

Sir William Jones, Knt. President; Sir Robert Chambers, Knt. David Anderson, James Anderson, Francis

the great object of their undertaking with unremitted ardour and undiminished success. Of the rest, some have returned to the bosom of their families and native country, not enriched by the plunder and splendid by the beggary and massacre of their fellow-creatures, as has been represented in the malevolent and illiberal harangues of indiscriminating obloquy, but possessed of those virtues which ennoble human nature, and that cultivation of mind and talents which dignify the enjoyment of retirement. Others of that society, equally honoured and equally estimable, are, alas, no more! The generous esteem, the cordial friendship, the warm admiration which accompanied them through life, has not been extinguished in the silent

Balfour, George Hilaro Barlow, John Bristow, Ralph Broome, Reuben Barrow, Esqrs. General John Carnac; William Chambers, Charles Chapman, Burnots Crisp, Charles Croftes, Jonathan Dunken, Esqrs. Major William Davy; Jonathan Duncan, Francis Fowke, Francis Gladwin, Thomas Graham, Charles Hamilton, Thomas Law, John David Paterson, Jonathan Scot, Henry Vansittart, and Charles Wilkins, Esqrs.

grave; it lives, and will long live, in the hearts of many, calling forth the tear of tender recollection, and of unextinguished, though, alas! unavailing sorrow.

The reader of sensibility will, it is hoped, pardon a digression into which the writer has been betrayed by feelings of which they know the power and influence, and from which she hastily returns, to remark that the happiness enjoyed by the Hindoos under the mild and auspicious government of their native Princes, and preserved, without any material interruption, through such a mighty period of revolving time as staggers the belief of the ever-fluctuating nations of Europe, was at length doomed to see its overthrow effected by the resistless fury of Fanatick zeal.

The impostor of Mecca had established as one of the principles of his doctrine, the necessity of extending it, either by persuasion or the sword, to all parts of the earth. How steadily this injunction was adhered to by his followers, and with what success it

was pursued, is well known to all who are in the least conversant in history.

The same overwhelming torrent which had inundated the greater part of Africa, burst its way into the very heart of Europe, and covered many kingdoms of Asia with unbounded desolation, directed its baleful course to the flourishing provinces of Hindostan. Here these fierce and hardy adventurers, whose only improvement had been in the science of destruction, who added the fury of fanaticism to the ravages of war, found the great end of their conquests opposed by obstacles, which neither the ardour of their persevering zeal, nor savage barbarity could surmount. Multitudes were sacrificed by the cruel hand of religious persecution, and whole countries were deluged in blood, in the vain hope, that by the destruction of a part, the remainder might be persuaded or terrified into the profession of Mahomedanism: but all these sanguinary efforts were ineffectual; and at length, being fully convinced, that though they might ex-

tirpate, they could never hope to convert any number of the Hindoos, they relinquished the impracticable idea with which they had entered upon their career of conquest, and contented themselves with the acquirement of the civil dominion and almost universal empire of Hindostan.

In these provinces, where the Mussulman jurisdiction was fully established, Mussulman courts of justice were erected. The laws which the Hindoos had for numberless ages been accustomed to revere, as of divine authority, were set aside, and all causes judged and decided by the standard of Mussulman jurisprudence; an evil which appeared to the unhappy Hindoo more formidable than the extortions of avarice, or the devastations of cruelty.* Nor was the effect of these latter passions unfelt; the peculiar punishment of forfeiting their Cast, which is attached by their law to the most temporary and seemingly trivial deviation

* See Scrofton's Hindostan.

from its precepts, and which involves in it the dreadful consequences of irremediable alienation and irreversible proscription was converted by their Mahomedan rulers into a lucrative source of oppression. Superstition combined with avarice to invent the means of inflicting this dreadful chastisement, and fines, without mercy, were exacted by those bigotted and venal judges.

By the same merciless conquerors, their commerce was impeded by every clog which avaricious and unfeeling power could invent to obstruct it. Neither the mild and tolerating spirit of the religion of the Hindoos, nor the gentle and inoffensive manners of its votaries, were sufficient to protect them from the intolerant zeal and brutal antipathy of their Mahomedan invaders. In the effusions of their barbarous enthusiasm, the temples of the Hindoos, ornamented with the most curious sculpture and decorated with all the ingenuity and skill for which they were celebrated, were utterly demolished, and the monuments of their ancient splendour every where destroyed.

For the support of the Mogul Nobles, assignments were granted on the lands of the different provinces, which were levied by these military lords in person, who, haughty and voluptuous, came to collect their pay from a timid people, whom they hated and despised with all the fervour of bigotry and ignorance.

To enumerate the multifarious load of oppression under which the unhappy Hindoos were doomed to groan, would be a tedious and ungrateful task. A generous mind cannot take pleasure in contemplating the picture of human misery and human crime, though drawn by the correct hand of truth: let it then suffice to say, that the whole system of Mogul government toward their conquered Provinces, was such as could never fail to shock an European mind.

Hard, however, as was the fate of the poor Hindoos under their Mogul Sovereigns, even in the most flourishing state of their empire; when that Empire mouldered to decay, and the power of one despot was overthrown to

make way for the uncontrolled licentiousness of numberless petty tyrants, it became yet more truly deplorable.*

The vigourous administration of a long line of able Princes, had alone for ages preserved this vast but heterogeneous and ill-constructed fabrick from dissolution; and when, according to the unavoidable consequences of hereditary despotism, the reins of government were transmitted into weak and feeble hands, it fell rapidly to ruin. To the wretched successor of the Imperial throne, the miserable representative of the house of Timur, little now remains but an universally acknowledged title to royalty, declared by inefficacious expressions of loyalty and attachment; while those who, by bold usurpation, successful rebellion, or insidious fraud, possessed themselves of the spoils of the ruined empire, have established in their own families the right of succession to the territories thus acquired.

* See Rohilla History.

In those provinces which, by a train of circumstances totally foreign to our purpose to relate, have fallen under the dominion of Great Britain, it is to be hoped the long-suffering Hindoos have experienced a happy change. Nor can we doubt of this, when we consider, that in those provinces the horrid modes of punishment inflicted by the Mahomedans have been abolished; the fetters which restrained their commerce have been taken off; the taxes are no longer collected by the arbitrary authority of a military chieftain, but are put upon a footing that at once secures the revenue and protects the subject from oppression. The Banditti of the Hills, which used to molest the inoffensive inhabitants by their predatory incursions, have been brought into peaceable subjection. That unrelenting persecution, which was deemed a duty by the ignoant bigotry of their Mussulman rulers, has, by the milder spirit of Christianity, been converted into the tenderest indulgencies. Their ancient laws have been restored to

them; a translation of them into the Persian and English languages has been made, and is now the guide of the Courts of Justice which have been established among them. Agriculture has been encouraged by the most certain of all methods—the security of property; and all these advantages have been rendered doubly valuable, by the enjoyment of a blessing equal, if not superiour, to every other—the Blessing of Peace, a blessing to which they had for ages been strangers.*

These salutary regulations, originating with Mr. Hastings, steadily pursued by Sir John M'Pherson and Lord Cornwallis, and persevered in by the present Governour General, will diffuse the smiles of prosperity and happiness over the best provinces of Hindostan long after the discordant voice of Party shall have been humbled in the silence of eternal rest; and the rancorous misrepresentations of envy and malevolence, as much forgotten as the florid harangues and turgid declamations which

* Review of the British Government in India.

conveyed them to the short-lived notice of the world.

The change which has been effected on the character and manners of the Hindoos during so many years of subjection and so many convulsions in their political state, is not by any means so great as such powerful causes might have been supposed to have produced.

In wandering through the desolated islands of the Archipelago, or even on the classick shores of Italy, the enlightened traveller would in vain hope to recognise, in the present inhabitants, one remaining lineament of the distinguishing characteristicks of their illustrious ancestors. *There* the mouldering edifice, the fallen pillar, and the broken arch, bear, alone, their silent testimony to the genius and refinement of the states which produced them. But in Hindostan, the original features that marked the character of their nation, from time immemorial, are still too visible to be mistaken or overlooked. Though they have, no doubt, lost much

of their original purity and simplicity of manners, those religious prejudices which kept them in a state of perpetual separation from their conquerors, have tended to the preservation of their originality of character and all its correspondent virtues.

In the few districts which, secured by their insignificancy or the inaccessibility of their situation, retained their independence, the original character still remains apparent. Such, till about the middle of the present century, was the fate of those whose territories were situate along the mountains of Kummaoom.

The inhabitants of this lofty boundary of the rich and fertile province of Kuttaher continued to enjoy the blessings of independence and security, till that province was brought under the subjection of a bold and successful Rohilla adventurer, who establishing himself and his followers in the possession of Kuttaher (which from thenceforth bore the name of Rohilcund) directed his arms toward the extirpation of those Rajahs

whose vicinity excited his jealousy and alarmed his pride.

He succeeded but too well in the execution of his unjust design, and did not fail to make the most tyrannical use of the victory he had obtained. Some of these Chiefs he banished for ever from the long enjoyed seats of their ancestors; some he removed to the other side of the Ganges, and from the few he suffered to remain, he stipulated the payment of an annual tribute* and the immediate deposit of an exorbitant fine.

The Rajah Zaarmilla, who will soon be introduced to the acquaintance of the reader, appears to have been descended from one of those petty Sovereigns who were obliged to put on the galling yoke of their unfeeling conqueror. He, however, must be supposed to have been among the number who were permitted to remain on their ancient territories, while the family of his friend and correspondent Maandaara appears to have

* See Rohilla History.

been banished from the Province, and to have taken shelter in the neighbourhood of Agra.

This short sketch, imperfect as it is, may serve to give some idea of the state of Hindostan, not only when the letters of the Rajah, which are now to be laid before the publick, were written, but antecedent to that period. Adequate, however, to the purpose of elucidation, as it may be thought by some readers, it may be censured by others, as a presumptuous effort to wander out of that narrow and contracted path which they have allotted to the female mind.

To obviate this objection, the writer hopes it will be sufficient to give a succinct account of the motives which led her to the examination of a subject at one time very universally talked of, but not often very thoroughly understood. From her earliest instructors she imbibed the idea, that toward a strict performance of the several duties of life, Ignorance was neither a necessary nor a useful auxiliary, but on the contrary, that she

ought to view every new idea as an acquisition, and to seize, with avidity, every proper opportunity for making the acquirement.

In the retirement of a country life, it was from books alone that any degree of information was to be obtained; but when these sequestered scenes where exchanged for the metropolis, opportunities for instruction, of a nature still more pleasing, were presented.

The affairs connected with the state of our dominions in India were then the general topick of conversation. It was agreeable, from its novelty; and she had the peculiar advantage of hearing it discussed by those who, from local knowledge, accurate information, and unbiassed judgment, were eminently qualified to render the discussion both interesting and instructive. The names of the most celebrated Orientalists became familiar to her ear; a taste for the productions of their writers was acquired; and, had it not been for a fatal event, which transformed the cheerful haunt of domestick happiness into the gloomy abode of sorrow, and

changed the energy of Hope into the listlessness of despondency, a competent knowledge of the language of the originals would likewise have been acquired. Time, at length, poured its balm into the wounds of affliction, and the mind, by degrees, took pleasure in reverting to subjects which were interwoven with the ideas of past felicity. The letters of the Rajah were sought for, and the employment they afforded was found so salutary in beguiling the hours of solitude and soothing the pain of thought, that the study of them was resumed as an useful relaxation, and, being brought to a conclusion, they are now presented to the world, whose decision upon their merit is looked forward to with timid hope and determined resignation.

IT has been justly complained, that the different orthography adopted by the Oriental translators is a source of much perplexity to the English reader; but from the variety of opinions that prevail upon the subject, it is an evil which cannot easily be remedied. Instead of the double vowels *ee* and *oo*, used by Mr. Wilkins, and frequently by Mr. Halhed, Sir William Jones substitutes *i* and *u*; and instead of the *K*, made use of by the former gentleman, he uses the letter *C*. From the different modes of pronunciation among the natives in the different provinces, another difficulty has arisen. It is from that cause that we frequently find the letter *B* a substitute for *V*, as Beena for Veena, &c.

IN the following Glossary, most of the Oriental words that occur in the Letters of the Rajah will be found.

GLOSSARY.

ARJOON, or ARUN. The dawn. *See* SURRAYA.

AVATORS. Descents of the Deity in his character of Preserver. Ten of these appearances of the Divinity are mentioned by the Hindoos, nine of which have already taken place; the tenth Avator we are told is yet to come, and is expected to appear mounted (like the crowned conqueror in the Apocalypse) on a white horse, with a cimetar, blazing like a comet, to cut down all incorrigible offenders.—*Asiatick Researches.*

BRAHMA. The creating Power.

BIBBY. Lady.

CARTICKYA. The God of War.

DEWTAH. The Divinity to whom worship is offered.

GLOSSARY.

DEVAS, or DAIVERS. The Hindoos suppose the Universe to be divided into fourteen regions, or spheres, of which six are below, and seven are above this of the Earth, next beyond the vault of the visible heavens is the first Paradise. The proper inhabitants of this region are called Devas or Daivers, they may be considered as Demi Gods, of whom Endra, or Indra, is the chief.

FAKEER, or FAQUIR. An order of religious recluses.

GANESA. In many parts of Hindostan every temple has the Image of Ganesa (the God of Wisdom) placed over its gate; and the door of every dwelling-house is superscribed with his name.

HIRCARRAH. A messenger. A spy.

KRISHNA. One of the Avators. His adventures are celebrated in the epick poem called the Mahabbaret. He is considered by Sir William Jones as the Appollo of the Hindoos.

KHANSAMAN. Land, or house steward.

LACKSHMI, or LACSHMI. The consort of Veeshnu. She, like the other Hindoo Goddesses, is distinguished by a variety of names; as Lackshmi, she is the Goddess of Fortune: as Sree, the Goddess of Plenty, or Hindoo Ceres.

MAYA. Explained by some Hindoo scholars to be "*the first inclination of the Godhead to diversify himself by creating worlds.*" 'But the word Mayá, or Delusion, has a more subtle and recondite sense in the Védánta Philosophy, where it signifies the system of *perceptions.*'—*See Asiatick Researches.*

MAHABBARET. An epick poem in the Shanscrit language, of great antiquity. The Bhagvat Geeta, an episode from this poem, has been translated into English by Mr. Wilkins.

GLOSSARY.

PUNDIT, or PUNDEET. A learned Bramin.

POOJAH. The performance of worship to the Gods.

RYOTS. Hindoo labourers, or peasants.

RAMOZIN. The Mussulman Lent, or great fast, observed for the period of 30 days.

RIGYAJUHSAMAT'HARVA. A compound word denoting the four immortal Vedas, namely, the Rig-veda, the Yajurveda, the Sama-veda, and the Atharva-veda.

SERRESWATTEE, or SERESWATI. The patroness of Science and Genius.

SHASTER. Literally a book. The Scripture of the Hindoos is, for pre-eminence called the *Shaster*.

SANC'HA. An ancient Hindoo Poet.

SURRAYA, or SURYA. The God of Light, or Orb of the Sun personified. The Sect who pay particular adoration to this Divinity are called Sauras. He has a multitude of names, and among them twelve epithets or titles which denote his distinct powers in each of the twelve months. The Indian Poets and Painters described his car as drawn by seven green horses, preceded by Arun, or Arjoon, the dawn, who is denominated his charioteer.

SANASSEE. A Hindoo devotee.

SAIB. Gentleman. Persons of estimation.

VAIDYA. The tribe who practice phyick. Physicians.

VARUNA. The Genius of the sea and wind.

VEDAS, or BEIDS. The sacred books of the Hindoos.

VEESHNU. The preserving Power.

VEENA, or BEENA, or BEEN. A musical instrument, of the Guittar kind.

ZIMEENDAR. A Landholder

LETTERS

OF

A HINDOO RAJAH.

LETTER I.

Zāārmilla, *Rajah of Almora*, to Kisheen Neêay Māāndāāra, *Zimeendar of Cumlore, in Rohilcund.*

PRAISE to Ganesa! May the benign influence of the God of Wisdom,* beaming on

* The God of Wisdom, a customary introduction to the writings of the Hindoos. From several expressions made use of by the Rajah in the course of his correspondence, he appears to have been an adherent of the sect called in the northern parts of India, Veeshnûbukt, or Adorers of Veeshnû, the preserving Power.

the breast of Maandaara, dispel those clouds of wrath which have been engendered by mistake, and poured forth in the whirlwind of impetuosity.

I might justly expostulate upon the harshness of thy expressions; but I call to mind the goodness of thy heart, and they are effaced from my memory. We shrink from the fury of the King of Rivers, when his terrour-striking voice threatens destruction to the surrounding world; but when his silver waves return to the peaceful channel allotted to them by the adored Veeshnû, we forget our terrours, and contemplate with rapture the majestick grandeur of the sacred stream who rolls his blessings to a thousand nations. And who would not prefer the casual fury of the mighty Ganges, to the apathetick dullness of the never moving pool?

The Angel of Truth, whose dwelling is with Brahma, be my witness, that I have never been unmindful of the vows of friendship we so solemnly exchanged over the still warm ashes of the venerable Pundit, who

was the guide and the instructor of our tender years. Twice, in performance of that vow, have I essayed to send the promised information, and twice have my intentions been frustrated.

No sooner had the auspicious arms of the sons of mercy opened the long-obstructed channels of conveyance and checked the fury of the Afghan Khans, who have so long oppressed our unhappy country,* than I dispatched a messenger to thee, with a full account of publick affairs, and of all the incidents that have occurred to me in my re-

* 'On the 22d day of April, 1774, was fought between the armies of the vizier, assisted by the English, and the troops of Hafiz Rhamut, the Rohilla Chief, the decisive battle of Cutterah; in which the complete victory obtained by the former at once annihilated the power and decided the fate of the Afghan adventurers. Wherever the fate of the Rohillas became known (says the historian of their short lived empire) the Hindoo Zimeendars (each of whom is possessed of a strong hold attaching to the chief village of his district) shut their forts, and refusing to their late masters protection, plundered without distinction all whom they found flying toward the hills.'

tirement. Two months ago I learned that this messenger was drowned in his attempts to pass the Jumna. Again I wrote the same voluminous detail, and sent it by the hands of a Hircarrah, employed in the English camp, and who was sent by them with dispatches to Agra, his native city. This messenger, more unfortunate than the other, was seized and cut in pieces by a band of brutal Afghans. Hoping that this account will fully exculpate me from the charge of neglect, and leaving it to the shrill voice of fame to acquaint thee with the publick transactions of this eventful period, I shall recapitulate such parts of my two epistles as regarded myself alone, and in conformity to the promises that have passed between us, shall lay open to you not only the actions of my life, but the very thoughts of my heart.

Three days after that in which the blood of the Khans had stained the plains of Cutterah,* word was brought me by the Zi-

* History of the Rohilla Afghans, page 241.

meendar of Lolldong, that our late oppressors were flying on the wings of despair to the mountains of Cummow. He conjured me, by all that we had suffered from the cruelty of Allee Mohamed and the tyranny of his successors, not to give passage to the fugitives; but by arming my Ryots, to disappoint their hopes of safety, and turn them back upon the swords of their enemies. I returned for answer, that 'I gave praise to Veeshnû, who had avenged the wrongs of the Hindoos, but that I had never learned to lift my hand against a fallen foe.' I then issued strict orders to all my Ryots to keep within their dwellings, and having performed the accustomary Poojah,* betook myself to rest. Reflections upon the vicissitudes of fortune agitated my soul. Sleep forsook my eyelids; and, while the earth was yet clothed in the robes of darkness, I went forth with a few attendants, in hopes that the temperate air and placid stillness of the

* Worship.

night would tranquilise my mind. With astonishment I perceived the eastern horizon already tinged by the flame coloured charioteer of Surrayâ.* I hastened to ascend the hill, that I might be ready to pay my devotions at the first appearance of the glorious orb, the sacred emblem of the life-giving spirit of the Eternal! I reached the summit of the hill, but, Powers of Mercy! what a sight then presented itself to my view? The vast jungle extending over the northern side of Cumlore was in a blaze of fire. The reflection of the mighty conflagration illuminated the heavens, while sounds more dreadful than had ever pierced my ears, undulated through the fire-fraught air. The shrieks of the affrighted Afghans, the shouts of the Hindoos, who had contrived this method to obstruct their flight, the growling of the tigers, and yelling of the

* Arjoun, or the dawn; who is expressively represented in Hindoo sculpture by the upper part only of a man, the rest of his person being supposed not yet emerged from darkness.

other beasts of prey, who had been disturbed in their dens, the crackling of the flames, and the bright glare of the still-spreading fire, formed altogether an unspeakable combination of horrours.

Many of the wretched fugitives passed the place where I stood; no longer the proud and haughty lords, at whose frown the Rajahs of the earth were wont to tremble: terrour now sat upon their humbled foreheads, and despair seemed the leader of their steps. While I contemplated their present calamity, the remembrance of their former tyranny passed into the bosom of oblivion. A young man appeared, the blood still streaming from his wounds while on his back he bore his aged father. In vain did the old man entreat this dutiful son to leave him to his fate; he still proceeded, with tottering steps, to convey him he knew not whither. 'Surely,' said I, 'the actions of this old man must have been meritorious in the sight of Heaven, that he should have been rewarded with such

a son.' I looked on the old warriour, and called to mind the grey hairs of my father.

I stopped the fugitives, who seeing my dress, looked on me without hope, and prepared themselves to receive the stroke of death. Whatever are your offences, said I to the son, your filial piety has in my eyes made atonement: turn, therefore, to the shelter of my fortress, where you may remain in safety till times of peace. They expressed their thankfulness, and with them I returned to my house. At the foot of the hill I heard a groan, which I perceived to proceed from under the branches of a tree that had lately fallen. I ordered my servants to search for the person who uttered it, and to my astonishment saw one in the dress of an English officer; he appeared to suffer the anguish of excessive pain, and though borne by the servants with all possible care, before we could reach the house the invisible spirit seemed about to forsake the noble dwelling that had been allotted to it. On examination we found that his leg and many of his ribs were

fractured. While I was in despair about this apparently irremediable misfortune, the old Afghan addressed himself to me, and professing his skill in the art of surgery, told me that he thought he could effect a cure. He accordingly applied such remedies as he deemed proper, and with such success that the stranger soon obtained some degree of relief. He no sooner lifted his eyes upon me, than calling to mind the English that had been taught us, by the Vaidya Beass, I held out to him the hand of friendship, saying, 'how do?' His eyes glistened with pleasure, and from that moment our hearts were united by the seal of friendship. When the tyrant pain had a little loosened the fetters of her power, he spoke to me in the Persian language; of which, as well as the Arabick and the different dialects of Hindostan, he was *perfect master*. His conversation was like the soft dew of the morning, when it falls upon the valley of roses; it at once refreshed and purified the soul. His knowledge, in comparison of that of the most

learned among the Pundits of the present age, was like the mountains of Cummow compared to the nest of the ant. The powers of his mind were deep and extensive as the wave of the mighty Ganges. His heart was the seat of virtue, and truth reposed in his bosom.

He had set out many months before, from Calcutta, with an intention of travelling through the northern parts of Hindostan, in order to trace the antiquities of the most ancient of nations. He had proceeded into Kuttaher, when a band of Afghans, headed by Daunda Adoola, who had been lately dismissed from the service of Hafiz Rhamut, took him prisoner. They confined him in a strong hold, on the banks of the Gurra; and on the approach of the combined armies of the English and Sujah Dowla, they left him exposed to the miseries of famine; but when obliged to fly to the woods of Cummow, they forced him to accompany their flight, in hopes that he might be the means of procuring them terms with the English, whose

honour they knew to be equal to their valour.

On their route to Cummow they were discovered by the Ryots of Raey Bandor, who by the orders of their master set fire to the wood in which they lay concealed; attempting, by this act of cruelty, meanly to avenge on these poor fugitives the death of his kindred and the loss of his Zimeendary. Captain Percy, for this was the name of my amiable guest, fled with the rest; being overpowered by fatigue, and alarmed by the yells of the tiger, he resolved to climb a tree for safety, and there to remain until he could put himself under the protection of a Hindoo. The tree he attempted had been one left almost cut by my servants, but who had neglected to pull it down; it unfortunately gave way to the pressure, and occasioned the fatal accident I have already mentioned.

Thou knowest, O Maandaara, how my mind has ever thirsted after knowledge. Thou knowest with what ardour I have

ever performed my *Poojah Seraswatee*,* and that, at an age when few young men have read the Beids of the Shaster,† I had not only studied the sacred pages, but had perused every famous writing in the Shanscrit language.

The acquisition of the Persick tongue opened to me a door of knowledge which I was not slow to enter. History, for sometime, became my favourite study. But what did the history of states and empires present to my view? Alas! what, but the weakness and the guilt of mankind? I beheld the few, whom fortune had unhappily placed in view of the giddy eminences of life, putting the reins of ambition into the bloody hand of cruelty, lash through torrents of perfidy and slaughter, till, perhaps, overthrown in their career, they were trampled on by others who were running the same guilty race: or if they survived to reach the goal

* Worship to Seraswatee, the Goddess of Letters.

† Scripture of the Hindoos.

they aimed at, living but to breathe the air of disappointment, and then drop into the sea of oblivion. Such is the history of the few whose guilty passions and atrocious deeds have raised them to *renown*, and to whom the stupid multitude, the willing instruments of their ambition, the prey of their avarice, and the sport of their pride, have given the appellation of *heroes*.

To the great body of the people I never could perceive that it made any difference who it was that held the scorpion whip of oppression, as into whatever hand it was by them conveyed, they were equally certain of feeling the severity of its sting. Meditating on these things, the deep sigh of despondency has burst from my heart. Can it be, said I to myself, that the omnipotent and eternal Ruler of the universe should create such multitudes for no other purpose but to swell the triumphs of a fellow mortal, whose glory rises in proportion to the misery he inflicts upon the human race? Surely, by what I learn from the actions of the princes

of the earth, virtue is a shadow, and the love of it, which I have heretofore cherished in my breast, is nothing but the illusive phantom of a dream!

By conversing with my English guest I got a different view of human nature. Through the medium of the Persick literature it appeared universally darkened by depravity. In the history of Europe it assumed a milder form. In Europe man has not always, as in Asia, been degraded by slavery, or corrupted by the possession of despotick power. Whole nations have *there* acknowledged the rights of human nature, and while they did so have attained to the summit of true glory. The Romans, whom the Persian* writers represent as the lawless invaders and fearless conquerors of the world; and the Greeks, whom they load with every opprobrium, were in fact nations of heroes. Spurning the chain of slavery,

* See Richardson's Introduction to the Persian Dictionary.

they wisely thought that human nature was too imperfect to be entrusted with unlimited authority; while they performed Poojah to the Goddess of Liberty, their hearts were enlarged by the possession of every virtue. She taught them the art of victory; strengthened their nerves in the day of battle; and, when they returned from the field of conquest, she gave sweetness to the banquets of simplicity, and rendered poverty honourable by her smiles. At length, Wealth and Luxury, the enemies of the Goddess, entered their dominions, and enticed the people from the worship of Liberty; who, offended by their infidelity, entirely forsook their country, making Happiness and Virtue the companions of her flight. On a re-examination of the conduct of these illustrious heroes, who, while their nation performed Poojah to Liberty, had gained the summit of fame, Percy pointed out to my view many imperfections, which while my breast was enflamed by the first ardour of admiration had escaped my notice. The love of Liberty itself, that glorious plant as

he called it, which if properly cultivated never fails to produce the fruits of virtue, sprung not (he said) in the Grecian, or the Roman breast, from the pure soil of universal benevolence, but from the rank roots of pride and selfishness. It never therefore extended to embrace the human race. This perfection of virtue was unknown in the world, till taught by the religion of Christ. This last assertion of Percy's appeared to me as a prejudice unfounded in truth. But such are ever the hasty conclusions of ignorance. I had been taught to believe that the pure doctrine of benevolence and mercy was unknown to all but the favoured race of Brahma; that the Christian faith, like that of the Mussulmans, was a narrow system of superstitious adherence to the wildest prejudices, engendering hatred, and encouraging merciless persecution against all who differed from them. Nothing can be more erroneous than this idea of Christianity. By the indulgence of my English friend I was favoured with the perusal of the Christian

Shaster.* The precepts it contains are simple, pure, and powerful, all addressed to the heart, and calculated for restoring the universal peace and happiness which has been banished from the earth since the days of the Sottee Jogue.†

The love of liberty in a people who are taught by the fundamental precepts of their Shaster, 'to do to others as they would have others do to them,' rises above the narrow spirit of selfishness, and extendeth to embrace the human race! Benevolent people of England! it is their desire, that all should be partakers of the same blessings of liberty

* Scriptures.

† The age of purity. The Hindoos reckon the duration of the world by four Jogues, or distinct ages. The Sottee Jogue, or age of purity, is said to have lasted 3,200,000 years, when the life of man is said to have extended to 100,000 years. The Tirtah Jogue, or age in which one third of mankind were reprobate, which consisted of 2,400,000 years. The Dwaper Jogue, in which one half of the human race became depraved, endured 1,600,000 years. And the Collee Jogue, in which all mankind are corrupted, is the present era. See Halhed's Gentoo Laws.

which they themselves enjoy. It was doubtless with this glorious view that they sent forth colonies to enlighten and instruct the vast regions of America. To disseminate the love of virtue and freedom, they cultivated the trans-Atlantick isles: and to rescue *our* nation from the hands of the oppressor, did this brave and generous people visit the shores of Hindostan!

You may imagine how desirous I was to become acquainted with some particulars concerning the form of government, laws, and manners, of this highly favoured nation. Provided the above particulars are *true*, it is of course to expect that they must all be formed after the model of perfection; and such, according to my conception of the accounts of Percy, they undoubtedly are.

It having pleased Brahma to create them all of one cast, among them are no distinctions, but such as are the reward of virtue. It is not there as in the profligate court of Delhi, where great riches, a supple adherence to the minister, and a base and venal

approbation of the measures of the court, can lead to titles and distinction. No. In England, the honours of nobility are invariably bestowed according to intrinsick merit. The titles and privileges of these heroes of the first class descend to their children. We may well suppose what care is bestowed on the education of these young nobles, whose minds are moulded into wisdom at Universities instituted for the purpose; where vice and folly are *alike* unknown: and where the faculties of a young man might have as *great* a chance of gettting leave to rust in ignorance as to be lost in dissipation! From these seminaries of virtue they are called to the Senate of the nation; where they debate with all the gravity and the interest that might be expected from their early habits of serious thought and deep investigation. The sons of the King, at an early age, take their seats in that tribunal, from whose decision there lies no appeal. As their example is supposed to animate the young Nobility, it may well be imagined how wise,

learned, grave, and pious, these princely youths must be: their actions are doubtless the mirrors of decorum, and their lips the gates of wisdom!

The equality of human beings in the sight of God being taught by their religion, it is a fundamental maxim of their policy, that no laws are binding which do not obtain the consent of the people. All laws are therefore issued by the sanction of their representatives; every separate district, town, and community, choosing from among themselves the persons most distinguished for *piety*, *wisdom*, *learning* and *integrity*, impart to them the power of acting in the name of the whole.

About four hundred of these eminent men, each of whom to all the requisites of a Hindoo magistrate,* unites the knowledge of a

* It is ordained that 'the magistrate shall keep in subjection to himself his *Lust*, *Anger*, *Avarice*, *Folly*, *Drunkenness*, and *Pride*: he who cannot keep these passions under his own subjection, how shall he be able to nourish and instruct the people? Neither shall he be seduced by the pleasure of the chace, nor be addicted to play, nor always

Christian philosopher, form what is termed the third estate.

Uninfluenced by the favour of party, uncontaminated by the base motives of avarice or ambition, they pursue with steady steps, the path of equity, and have nothing so much at heart as the publick welfare. No war can be engaged in, and no taxes imposed, but by the consent of these patriot chiefs. Judge then, my friend, how light the burden must be, that is laid on by these representatives, these brothers of the people. Never can such men as these be instrumental in sending war, with all its attendant miseries, into the nations of the earth, all of whom they are taught by their Shaster to consider as brethren. In Asia we behold the gory monster, ever ready to stalk forth with destructive stride at the voice of ruthless tyranny; but in Europe,

employed in dancing, singing, and playing on musical instruments. Nor shall he go to any place without a cause, nor dispraise any person without knowing his faults, nor shall he envy another person's superiour merit, nor shall say that such persons as are men of capacity are men of no capacity, &c.' See Code of Gentoo Laws, page 52.

Princes are the friends of peace and the fathers of their people.

Many of our Pundits have contemplated with astonishment the animosities that have arisen among the followers of the Arabian prophet, on account of the different interpretations given by their* Imaums to certain passages of the Koran; forgetting that the Supreme Being delighteth in variety, and that He who hath not formed any two objects in his vast creation exactly similar, took doubtless no less care upon the formation of the human mind, perceiveth with delight the contrarieties of opinion among men. They have carried their presumption so far, that one sect hath dared to conceive hatred and ill will against another, for not viewing every dark passage in the writings of their Prophet exactly in the same light! How different is the case with the Christian? The great Founder of their

* See Preliminary Discourse of the Bramins, employed by Mr. Hastings in the Pootee, or compilation of the ordinations of the Pundits.—Gentoo Laws.

religion having left every man at liberty to choose the form of worship which he finds best calculated to excite and to express sentiments of devotion, they each attach themselves to the form most agreeable to their own minds, allowing the same liberty to others, and convinced that all are equally acceptable to the Deity, who acquiesce in his laws and obey his commandments. In the dominions of the Mussulmans, though all sects are permitted to live, it is one sect alone (the orthodox*) that is invested with power, or entrusted with authority. But among Christians what sect exists, that would accept of the most beneficial distinctions on terms so contrary to the spirit of their Gospel? No. All sects, equal in the eye of Heaven, must needs, by the wise and virtuous Legislators of this happy country, be admitted into an equal enjoyment of every right and every privilege. The

* See the Hedaya or Commentary on the Mussulman Laws.

Priests of their religion are, as their characters are fully set forth in their Shaster, men who despise the adventitious advantages of rank and fortune, who regard no distinctions in their flock but the distinctions arising from internal worth and intrinsick goodness; not thirsting after worldly honours; not given to luxury; strangers to avarice and pride. Having no bitterness against those who differ from them in opinion, animosity, strife, or wrath, is never heard of among these holy men, who, in the language of their Shaster, 'pass through things temporal, only mindful of those which are eternal.' Although my unwearied application to the study of the English language enables me to read a few passages in that tongue, it is to the Arabick copy of those books of the Shaster, called Gospels, to which I am indebted for the accuracy of my information.

Not presuming to lift the veil of mystery with which some passages are enveloped (a presumption which in a stranger would

be equally unpardonable and unbecoming,) I pass over whatever appears to be mysterious with the most profound respect. But that power which taught me to sweep from my heart the dust of prejudice, taught me also to pay homage to excellence, wherever it might be found. In the precepts of the Christian Shaster I behold the grandeur of sublimity and the simplicity of truth. There is one particular so novel, so peculiar, so repugnant to the universally received opinions of mankind, that it considerably excited my astonishment. In the revelation bestowed upon the Christians, women are considered in the light of rational beings! free agents! in short, as a moiety of the human species, whose souls are no less precious in the eye of the Omniscient than that of the proud lords of the creation! What can be more extraordinary?

The inferiority of women appears so established by the laws of nature, and has been so invariably inculcated by all the legislators sent by Brahma to enlighten the eight

corners of the world, that it seems altogether incontestible. It is true that our divine laws (incomparable in wisdom!) do not, like the laws of the Mussulmans, absolutely exclude women from the participation of happiness in a future state, it being written in the Shaster, '*that a woman who burns herself with her husband, shall live with him in Paradise three crore and fifty lacks of years.*' But even in this case, it is contested by the Pundits, that her admission into Paradise depends on her husband's title to an entrance into that state of felicity. Uncertain tenor! precarious dependance! on which a poor woman commits herself to the flames! Wisely did our lawgivers ordain, that ignorance and submission should be the ornaments of women; seeing how much the privilege of inquiry might have disquieted their repose!

Christian women are more fortunate; they may enjoy Heaven without the company of their husbands! Throughout the Christian Shaster they are exalted to perfect equality

with man. They are considered as occupying a station of equal dignity in the intelligent creation, and as being equally accountable for the use they make of the gift of reason and the monitions of conscience. What care! what pains! must we then conclude to be bestowed by Christians on the formation of the female mind? 'As the beams of the moon kindle the flowers of the Oshadi, so,' says the philosopher, 'doth education expand the blossoms of intelligence.' Where women are destined to be under no control but that of reason, under no restraint save the abiding consciousness of the searching eye of Omnipotence, of what vast importance must their education appear in the eyes of the enlightened! Accordingly we find that seminaries of female instruction, called Boarding-schools, are in England universally established; where, by what I can learn, the improvement of the understanding is as successfully attended to, and every solid and useful accomplishment as fully attained, as are the severe morals of

Christianity by their brothers at the university. When the females of England have completed their education in these seats of science, these nurseries of wisdom, they come forth like the mother of Krishna, the torch of reason enlightening their minds, and the staff of knowledge supporting their virtue! In that enlightened country, a wife is the friend of her husband. Motives of esteem influence the choice of both; for there women are at liberty to choose, or to reject offers of marriage, and educated as they are we may well suppose how wisely they will always choose! By their religion, men are prohibited from having more than one wife at a time, which at first view will doubtless appear a hardship in your eyes: but if you consider what an endless source of disquiet, the quarrels, jealousies and strifes among our wives frequently produce, you will perhaps acknowledge that to lessen the number is not so great a misfortune.

What I have said concerning the cultivation of the female understanding will per-

haps appear ridiculous in your eyes; but take the following proof of the veracity of my assertion. One day that I had been studying the Shaster of my English guest, I perceived, written in fair and legible characters, upon the first leaf, these words; 'The parting gift of Charlotte Percy to the most beloved of brothers.' I carried the book to my friend, who was still confined to his couch, and asked him if Charlotte was the name of his brother? He answered with a smile, that Charlotte was the name of his dear and amiable sister. 'Your sister!' repeated I, with astonishment, 'Can it be, that in your country a woman is permitted to touch the Shaster? or are women taught to write? It cannot be. Such things are not proper for women.' He replied, that my surprise was occasioned by having always been accustomed to behold the sex in the degrading state of subjection. A state which, wherever it prevails, subdues the vigour and destroys the virtue of the human mind. Man, he observed, received from

nature no passion so powerful as the love of tyranny. This, the superiority of bodily strength had enabled him to exercise over the weaker part of his species with uncontrolled sway. In proportion as society advanced in civilization, the advantages of reason over bodily strength prevailed, and the passions received from the fetters of restraint a degree of polish, which, if it did not change their nature, rendered them less disgustingly ferocious. The wife of a Hindoo, continued he, is from this cause treated with more respect, and enjoys a much greater degree of liberty and happiness, than the wife of an untutored Afghan. But it is not in the nature of man to relinquish claims so flattering to his pride; and the innate love of the exercise of despotick authority must have for ever kept the female sex in a state of subjection, had not the powerful mandate of religion snapped their chains. This, the religion received by the Christians has fully accomplished: and to shew you how much it is in the power of education to improve

the female mind, continued my friend, I shall translate, for your perusal, some of the letters of that sister whose name is written in the leaf of the book you are now reading. According to this promise, my excellent friend translated for me several pieces both in prose and verse, presenting me at the same time with copies of the originals that I might compare them together. By that which I have enclosed for your satisfaction, you will perceive that the sister of Percy has not only learned to read and write, but is in a considerable degree capable of thinking. Nursed in solitude, she in early youth took delight to string the pearls of poetry. I send you one of the first of these gems of fancy, which though it boasts not the radiant brilliancy of the Diamond, is pleasing as the varying Opal, and soft as the lustre of the green Emerald. It was written after having refused an invitation to a party of pleasure on account of her duty to an aged uncle, who had adopted her as his daughter, and of whom she speaks with the language

of filial affection, Let it be read with candour, for it is the offspring of youth; with indulgence, for it is the tribute of gratitude!

Blest be these rural glens, these flowery glades;
The lov'd retreats of innocence and joy:
Content's sweet voice is heard beneath these shades;
Her quiet seat no wild wish dares annoy.

Dear to my heart is this sequester'd scene,
By liberal nature deck'd in robes so gay:
O'er all my soul she breathes her sweets serene,
As in her walks I take delight to stray.

'Twas her sweet hand that strew'd this bank with flowers;
She bends these osiers o'er the chrystal stream;
She twines the woodbine round these leafy bowers?
And turns that rose bud to the morning's beam.

From her, sweet Goddess, here in youth, I drew
Spirits as light as airy fancy's wing:
'Twas here I mark'd each glowing tint she threw
On the fair bosom of the opening spring.

And shall I leave her? leave her lov'd retreat?
For scenes where Art her mimick power displays,
For the false pleasures of the gay and great;
Pride's empty boast, and Splendor's midnight blaze.

Can Pride, can Splendor's most triumphant hour,
Give any pleasure to the breast so dear,

So exquisite, as is the conscious power
A venerable parent's days to cheer?

Ah! then, from thee, my guardian and my friend,
Let never vagrant wish presume to stray;
But on my steps let filial love attend,
Gently to sooth thy life's declining day.

Can I forget what to thy love I ow'd?
Forget thy goodness to my orphan state?
Forget the boons thy tenderness bestow'd?
Or thy unchang'd affection's early date?

When my lov'd father press'd his early bier,
(From which, alas! nor youth nor love could save)
And when my widow'd mother (doom severe!)
Victim of sorrow! sunk into the grave.

Thy care a more than father's care supplied,
Thy breast a more than father's fondness knew,
Led by thy hand, or cherish'd at thy side,
My infant years in sprightly pleasures flew.

No frown from thee repress'd the harmless joy,
No harsh reproof repell'd the lively thought.
Pleas'd, thou couldst smile on childhood's simplest toy,
And say, 'no pleasures were so cheaply bought.'

Can I forget the partner of thy cares?
Whose kind attention form'd my early youth;
Or with what care she watch'd my tender years;
And in life's morning sow'd the seeds of truth?

'Twas her instructions, pious, prudent, wise,
Taught me the virtues that adorn our sex;
Its humblest duties bade me not despise,
But rise superiour to its weak defects;

Taught me to scorn mean Pride's malignant sneer,
The tale calumnious, cautious to receive;
To Misery's voice to turn a willing ear?
Its woes to pity, or its wants relieve;

Taught me on pure Devotion's wings to rise
To the unseen, supreme, eternal Power;
Whose works an equal theme of praise supplies,
In heav'n's starr'd concave, or earth's humble flower.

If e'er my breast with love of virtue glow'd,
Or ardent sought the Muses' hallow'd shrine,
To thee my dawning taste its culture ow'd;
Each high born sentiment, dear shade, was thine.

Oh! if thy sainted spirit hovers near,
With smiles benign my filial vows approve:
Vows like thy conduct, artless, and sincere,
Pure as thy faith, and spotless as thy love.

But See! where comes my venerable sire,
With cheerful air and looks serenely gay:
He comes to lead me to the social fire.
To warn me of the dews of parting day.

I come, my more than father! best of friends!
Dear, good old man; how good, how dear to me?

Beyond thy life for me no hope extends;
My comfort, and my peace, expire with thee.

Thus far did Zaarmilla write to his friend Maandaara, by the slave who perished in the swellings of the Jumna. Captain Percy had been then five months under the shadow of my roof; the skill of the Afghan had not been sufficient to join the fractured bone; so that great pain was inflicted upon him. I had often attempted to get an account of his situation transmitted to the English camp, but without success. The troops of the Afghans surrounded me, and the danger of discovering to them, that an English officer was in their power, obliged me to act with the utmost circumspection. At length, in the month Assen (October) the treaty was concluded between the Khan of Rampore and the great powers. I besought and obtained leave from Fyzoola Khan to go myself to the camp of the English, which was yet at the foot of the mountains. Captain Percy, weakened by the langour of disease, and

sinking under the pressure of incessant pain, revived at my proposal: the big tear glistened in his eye, and pressing my hand between his, God shall bless thee, my dear Zaarmilla, cried he, the God of Heaven shall bless thee for thy kindness to me. In contemplating the approaching dissolution of my being, unshaken confidence in the mercies of my God and Saviour support my soul. Death has for me no terrors; but methinks it would brighten the dark passage that leads to it, could I again behold any of my former friends and countrymen; their accounts would soften to my sister the tidings of an event that will pierce her soul. She knows not the goodness of Zaarmilla, and will only imagine to herself the figure of her dying brother expiring among strangers.

Could she be assured how often my sufferings have been alleviated by the balm of sympathy, and how much the endearing sensibilities of cordial friendship have refreshed my soul, it would be a solace to her affliction.

He then wrote as much as strength would permit, to a British officer, who was his particular friend, and enclosing it in a few lines to the commander in chief, delivered it into my hands.

I pursued my journey to the foot of the mountains, attended only by a small retinue. When we reached the place of our destination, we had the mortification to find that it had been for some time abandoned by the English, who were on their march down the country. I did not hesitate to follow them; though, being unused to travel, I was overtaken by fatigue, and annoyed by the rains, which began at this time to set in with great violence.

After a tedious and disagreeable journey, I at length reached Rhamgaut, where the English army, at the request of the Vizier, had for some time halted. I was received by the commander with the eye of kindness, and recommended by him to his officers with the voice of praise. The chief to whom captain Percy had written, wel-

comed me in the warmth of friendship, and bestowed upon my conduct unmerited eulogium.

Soon as my limbs had recovered from the weariness of fatigue, this Saib, and another dear and intimate friend of the unfortunate Percy, who was deeply skilled in the science of medicine, purposed returning with me, in order to solace, and if possible to restore the amiable youth. The rains continued to descend; but the spirit of true friendship rises superiour to every obstacle. *We carried* with us the good wishes of an host of friends, and, supported by hope, accomplished our journey in safety.

From the accounts I had communicated concerning the situation of our friend, doctor Denbeigh, the friend on whose knowledge in the healing art his brother officers placed so much reliance, had pronounced great hopes concerning him; hopes which inspired the alacrity of cheerfulness. Alas! as the blood-stained tiger of the forest rushes

on the timid fawn, who unconscious of his presence, sports within the reach of his ferocious grasp, so doth calamity dart upon the cherished hope of mortals.

When we approached my dwelling, the Khansaman, under whose particular care I had left my friend, came out to meet us. His eyes were heavy with the tears of grief, and his whole deportment was marked by the pressure of recent sorrow. I was afraid to question him, lest his answer should bereave me of hope; but at length my tongue articulated Percy's name. Alas! my fears were just. The pure spirit had fled from its corporeal confinement to the boundless expansion of infinity. Three days had elapsed since the body, deserted by its celestial inhabitant, had been committed to the earth; I visited the dust which covered it, and gave vent to the grief that oppressed my soul. The friends of Percy united their tears with mine: they were the pure offering of friendship flowing from hearts of sincerity. After we had indulged the first

impulses of grief, the Rhansaman presented us with the papers which our friend had consigned to his care. These were a sealed packet, directed to his sister, a letter to his English friend, with directions concerning his effects, and an epistle to me, written with the pen of affection. To me he bequeathed, as a token of his love, the little shrill-voiced monitor, whose golden tongue proclaims the laspe of time, called in English a repeating watch, his sister's picture, together with all the manuscripts of her writing, his English Shaster, and, in short, all that was about his person when I had the happiness of receiving him under my roof. I have since perused with care the precious relicts of this amiable young man. In the leaves of his pocket-book were written many valuable remarks, some of which had evidently been deposited there but a short time before the Angel of Death arrested the hand which wrote them. Among his loose papers were several pages; entitled, 'Thoughts on the Prevalence of Infidelity;' in which the names of Hume,

Bolingbroke, and Voltaire, frequently occur. It will oblige me if you inquire of the Immaum Yuseph Ib'n Medi for some information concerning these men; who, I make no doubt, are of the sect of Hanbal, against whose opinions the Mussulman doctors so bitterly inveigh. What makes me certain they are not Christians is, that from what Percy has said concerning their opinions, it is evident that these unhappy men are unconscious of the precious spark of immortality which glows within their bosoms. Nay, so much are they inflated by vanity, so infatuated by the spirit of pride, as to utter words of arrogance with the tongue of presumption; saying, that men ought *not* to believe in the supreme Inheritor of eternity.

Our departed friend concludes his remarks upon these people in the following words:

'Ye who are so keen to disseminate the baneful principles of infidelity, did ye know what it is to watch the slow but steady steps of death; to behold his approach in the silence of solitude, where the whispers of vani-

ty are unheard, and the *small still* voice of conscience alone speaks audibly to the soul, ye would not, surely, be so rashly forward to dash from the lips of a fellow mortal the cordial draught of hope, and to offer in its stead the bitter cup of doubt, uncertainty, and despair!

'The principles of religion are so congenial to the human mind, that I am convinced they would almost always remain permanent, was it not for the adventitious prejudices with which the pure and simple doctrines of Christianity are so entangled by the zealous adherents of every sect and party.

'Of all my contemporaries, they have ever been the foremost to throw off the restraints of religion, who have been what is termed *most strictly educated*; but who never had any religious sentiments impressed upon their minds distinct from the particular dogmas of their respective sects. With these dogmas their ideas of the truth of Christianity were inseparably combined; and when they afterward came to mingle with the world, and

found their prejudices untenable against the attack of argument, the force of reason, or the sneer of ridicule, the whole fabrick of their faith was shaken to the foundation. Blessed be the memory of the parent who instructed me; whose care it was to impress upon my mind the strictest principles with the most liberal opinions. In her eyes the *mode* of worship was nothing; the spirit from which it proceeded was every thing.'

'My feelings tell me that the lamp of life is nearly exhausted. Never more shall I behold the face of a friend. No sister's friendly hand to smooth my pillow, or to sooth my soul with the tender accents of affection. My impatience for the pleasure of seeing my friend Grey, has deprived me of the comfort I have hitherto received from the consoling sympathy and unremitting kindness of the amiable Hindoo.

'Remote from country, friends, and all that my heart has been accustomed to hold dear; —but what, in a moment like this, could friends or country do for me? what, but to

'point the parting anguish.' I am *not* alone. No. The ever-present God is with me; and his comforts support my soul. Often in the hour of health, have I repeated with rapture the lines of the poet: and now I am called to be an evidence of their truth.

"Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on th' Atlantick isles; 'tis nought to me:
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where His spirit breathes there must be joy.
When e'en, at last, the solemn hour shall come
And wing my mystick flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers
Will rising wonders sing. I cannot go
Where universal love not smiles around."*

Such, O! Maandaara, was the conclusion of the life of this European. His two friends

* As Zaarmilla was unable to proceed farther in the translation, we have thought proper to fill up the blank with what we imagine to have been the poetical passage alluded to by Captain Percy.

abode with me for a few days, and departed, loaded with every mark of my friendship and esteem. I was no sooner left alone, than melancholy took possession of my mind. The conversation of Captain Percy gave light to my soul; it was at an end; and darkness again surrounded me.

The Rajah of Lolldong and his brother, the Zimeendar, heard of my affliction and came to comfort me. Alas! they were both too full of their own concerns to take any part in the grief which filled my heart. In the late calamities of our nation, their lands had been ravaged by the troops of the Vizier. The protecting hand of the English had not been able to save their villages from the ruthless hand of the destroyer; and their Ryots were consequently unable to pay their rents. I listened to the story of their distresses with concern, and said all in my power to comfort them. A second, and a third time, they repeated the particulars of their grievances; and though they both usually spoke at once, still I listened with patience. But when I

found them obstinately persist in cherishing the feelings of selfish regret for their own particular misfortune, while the miseries of thousands, who, on the same occasion, had lost their all, found no entrance into their hearts, I could no longer listen to their complaints with the semblance of attention; and, perceiving that they wearied me, they departed.

In the innocent and playful vivacity of the little Zamarcanda I have found a better substitute for intellectual enjoyment than in the tiresome solemnity of sententious dulness. But still the soft dew of contentment sheds not its divine influence on the dwelling of Zaarmilla. My mind is tossed in the whirlwind of doubt, and bewildered in the labyrinth of conjecture: but let not Maandaara mistake the word of his friend; let him not imagine that my veneration for the Gods of my fathers can be lessened by the words of a stranger: or, that I am so far misled, as to conceive that the greatest portion of wisdom bestowed by Brahma upon any nation in the

world's circumference, can bear any comparison with that which has been given in the sacred Vedas. No. I bow with reverence while I pronounce the name of the sacred volumes; and confess that in Rigya-juhsámás' Harva the immortal treasures of true knowledge are deposited.

But in what text of the Veda, Upa Veda, Vedanga, Purana, Dherma, or Dhersana,* is it forbidden to contemplate the operation of Mâya throughout the sea-girt earth? Why should I remain in doubt as to the truth of the accounts given me by the young Christian? Why should I not satisfy my mind by a farther acquaintance with his countrymen, by which alone I can discover whether his words have been dictated by the spirit of delusion, or emanated from the heart of integrity?

If his accounts are just; if the book he has given me be *indeed* the Shaster of the Chris-

* The six great Shasters, on which all knowledge, divine and human, is supposed to be comprehended. See Asiatick Researches, vol. i, article 18.

tians, I can, in that case, have no doubt of its being the guide of their practice, as well as the rule of their faith; nor help feeling an ardent desire for knowing more of men, whose conversation must be so full of purity, and whose lives are devoted to good works!

What I have already learned from the worthy European, whose death has caused the arrow of affliction to rankle in my bosom, so far from hurting my mind, has served but to invigorate my virtue. It is by the breath of Ganesa, that the flame of curiosity has been kindled in my bosom. And wherefore should I not indulge myself in following that path to knowledge, which the spirit that enlighteneth my understanding impelleth me to pursue? If the sun of science, which rose with radiant splendour on our eastern hemisphere, now beams its fervid rays upon the regions of the west, why should I be prevented from following its glorious course?

Thou wilt, perhaps, tell me of what I owe to my Cast, my country, and my people. As to the first, thou knowest, that the ac-

quirement of knowledge is not a duty confined to the race which sprung from the mouth of Brahma; and though it is necessary that every Hindoo should keep himself free from contamination, yet many holy men have found it possible to do so, in the strictest sense, even while they made their abode in the dwellings of Mahommedans and Christians. No opportunity could offer more favourable than the present, for quitting my country, without prejudice to my own interest or that of my people. The peace which has been happily restored to us is ensured by the faith of our deliverers : and, moreover, the wisdom, generosity, and clemency, which adorn the character of Fyzoola Khan,* give the best pledge for the security of our possessions.

I have, therefore, no obstacle to surmount in the accomplishment of my wishes but one. It is the disposal of Zamarcanda. Could I leave her in the possession of my friend, my

* See the Rohilla History.

mind would be at rest. And who so worthy to be the wife of Maandaara as the sister of Zaarmilla? She is yet in the tenderness of youth, but is accomplished in all that our laws permit women to learn. Her mind is pure as the lilly that bends its silver head over the transparent stream. Modesty is enshined in her cheeks, and beauty sparkles through the deep fringe which encircles her ground-kissing eyes. The blood of a thousand Rajahs flows through her veins, and her Ayammi Shadee* shall be worthy of the love of her brother. If this proposal seemeth good in thine eyes, I will meet thee at Ferrochabad, in the middle of the month Phogoun,† and there thou shalt receive the virtuous maiden from the hands of thy friend.

I expect thy answer with impatience. Farewell.

* Ayammi Shadee, the present made to a young woman by her relations, during the period of her betrothment, and which is, ever after, considered as her own property. See the Gentoo Laws.

† Answering to part of our February and March.

LETTER II.

The most faithful of Friends, Kisheen Neĕay Māāndāāra; *to the Powerful and enlightened Rajah*, Seeta Juin Zāārmilla.

PRAISE be to Veeshnû! The long wished-for letter from the friend of my youth hath kindled the fire of conflicting passions in the breast of Maandaara. The assurance of thy continued kindness lights the spark of joy; but the intelligence of the infatuation that hath seized thy mind envelopes my soul in the dark cloud of despair. I perceive that thou art under the influence of enchantment, and that that false stranger hath used some charm to deceive thy understanding. What would the spirit of thy father, what would the learned Pundit, to whose instructions we are equally indebted, what would

they pronounce, could they hear that Zaarmilla thought it necessary to sojourn among infidels and impious eaters of blood, in order to acquire knowledge? Can a race who sprung from the dust that was shaken from the feet of Brahma, and who are on that account beneath the meanest Sooder, who is honoured in being permitted to touch thy sandals, a race, who though less savage than that of the Mussulmans with regard to those that bear the human form, exceed them in cruelty to all the other animated inhabitants of the earth. Can any of this race be capable of instructing the descendant of a thousand Rajahs? Impossible. From the ant thou mayest learn industry. From the dog thou mayest be instructed in faithfulness. The horse may teach thee diligence, and the elephant instruct thee in patience, magnanimity, and wisdom; but expect not from Europeans to attain the knowledge of any virtue. How should they be learned that are but of yesterday? Their remotest annals extend but to the trifling period of a few

thousand years. While enlightened and instructed in mystery, we can trace the history of revolving ages through the amazing period of the four Jogues.

I am not, however, surprised that you should be the dupe of their enchantments. I know how far the evil genii have assisted them in that art: of their proficiency in it I had myself a very convincing proof.

When the English Saib, to whom Ruraha Bedwan was Mounshi, abode at Agra, he took pleasure in astonishing those who went to visit him with a display of his magical skill. Among several other tricks, he made the whole company, consisting of more than twenty persons, lay hold of each other's hands, and form a circle, and then by turning the handle of a little instrument, composed only of metal and glass, but which, I suppose, must have contained the evil spirits obedient to his command; he, all at once, caused such a sensation to pass through the arms of the company, as if a sudden stroke had broken the bone, which was not, how-

ever, on examination, found to be in the least injured. As all felt it precisely at the same moment, it was impossible that he could have touched each of us, and therefore it is evident that it could be nothing but magick that could produce so extraordinary an effect. At another time he shut out the piercing light of day, which has always been unfavourable to such practices, and made us behold armies of men, and elephants, and horses, pass before us on the wall. When they disappeared, they were succeeded by a raging sea, vomiting fire, and foaming with all the appearance of a tremendous storm. Ships rolled upon the bosom of the deep; and men who appeared wild with distress, and panting in the agony of terrour, were exerting themselves to save their lives and preserve their ships from the pointed rocks which environed them. This sight of horrour drew tears from our eyes; and we burst into exclamations of sorrow. When lo! in a moment, the sun being admitted into the apartment, the scene vanished, and we saw

nothing but the hangings which formerly adorned the wall.

Would the son of Coashhind forsake the land of his fathers, and wander to regions which the glorious luminary of heaven scarcely designs to irradiate with his golden beams, to learn tricks like these? Surely there are jugglers enough in Hindostan who would, for a small reward, instruct him in the mysteries of the magick art; and as the devils they employ are of our own country, they must be of a less pernicious nature than those of strangers.

So far from being guided by wisdom, the laws by which these people are governed are abominable and absurd: which I shall demonstrate to you by the following facts, of which I was myself an eye witness during my short abode at their camp. Like you, I had suffered my mind to be prejudiced in favour of a people whose conduct had been so favourable to our nation. The order and regularity which prevailed among them, impressed me at first with the highest idea of

their virtue and wisdom. I had as yet seen no appearance of any religious ceremony among them, when, on the third day after my arrival, my attention was attracted by a procession, which I immediately supposed to be in honour of their Dewtah. Curious to behold the nature of their ceremonies upon this occasion, I followed the procession, at which part of the camp assisted. When lo! to my equal surprise and horrour, I beheld one poor soldier stripped, tied up, and almost lacerated to death; a thousand lashes being inflicted upon his naked shoulders. That one of their priests should have undergone all this in voluntary penance, would not have surprised me. We every day see instances of greater sufferings than this inflicted by our Fakeers upon their own bodies. But I could not forbear astonishment, when informed, that this cruel ceremony was performed as a punishment upon a soldier for the trifling crime of purloining a few rupees from one of his officers. Doubtless, thought I, the morals of the people must be very pure, in

whose eyes so small an offence can seem worthy of so great a punishment.

While I yet ruminated upon the scene which I had witnessed, I was called to the tent of an officer, who had, ever since my arrival at the camp, treated me with great kindness. I had not long conversed with him (for he spoke very good Mhors) when several of his brother officers came to visit him. They conversed in their own language, and appeared, from the frequent bursts of laughter which escaped them, to have entered upon a very pleasant topick. I was unwilling to lose the knowledge of a discourse which seemed to produce so much mirth; and applied to my interpreter for information. He told me the subject of their merriment was the *dishonour* of one of their own countrymen, a Chief of rank and eminence, whose wife had suffered the torch of her virtue to be extinguished by the vile breath of a seducer. How great, cried I, must be the torture awaiting the wretch who could be guilty of so great a crime? If

the poor pilferer of a few rupees was doomed to suffer so severely, what must the man undergo, who could basely contaminate the bed of his friend, rob him of his honour, and destroy his peace? If the weight of the punishment keeps pace with the gradation in atrocity, imagination can hardly paint to itself any thing so dreadful as the sufferings to which this wretch must be condemned. This observation, repeated by my Mounshi, redoubled the mirth of the company; and I heard, with astonishment, that the dishonour of one of these *illustrious Europeans* was to be compensated, not by the punishment of the aggressor; not by the sacrifice of his life, and the degradation of his family, but by a sum of money! Can virtue subsist among a people, who set a greater value upon a few pieces of silver, than upon their honour?

This circumstance did not fail to destroy the impression I had received in favour of these people. But I should, perhaps, have remained some longer time among them, had I not beheld a deed so horrible as filled

my soul with indignation and disgust. Yes, my misguided friend, I saw these heroes, whom you falsely imagine so pure, so harmless, so full of piety and benevolence, I saw them—my heart shudders and my hand trembles while I relate it, I saw them devour, with looks that betokened the most savage satisfaction, the sacred offspring of a spotted cow. Yes, Zaarmilla, this unhappy calf, for whom a thousand holy Fakeers would have risked their lives, was slain at the command of these inhuman Europeans, and devoured by them without one pang of remorse.

Does not nature itself revolt at such an action? And had any spark of religious knowledge enlightened their minds, would they not have perceived, that the calf they slew, was, if not so learned, at least more pious and more uncontaminated by the corruption of impure ideas, than themselves. Tell me no more of the virtue of such men. And no more, I conjure thee, think of incurring the wrath of Mahadeo, by dishonouring thy Cast, and forfeiting its sublime privi-

leges, at the instigation of a curiosity, which has doubtless been kindled in thy mind by the powerful charms of magical incantations. These spells would probably have failed in their effect, hadst thou not incurred the displeasure of the Dewtah, by neglecting to perform the duty to which every Hindoo is bound; the indispensible duty of marriage. Four years have elapsed since, in obedience to the command of my father, I married the daughter of the reverend Gopaul. She was ill-favoured, and of a bad temper: so that, being disgusted with her peevishness, and still more with the plainness of her countenance, (for in a beautiful woman many errours may be forgiven) I parted with her some months since, and presenting her with her *ayammi shadee*, sent her back to the house of her father. I will, therefore, with great pleasure accept of your sister for my wife. With this intention, I sometime ago inquired after her disposition, and heard that she was beautiful and good tempered; which is the utmost perfection in women.

To what purpose should they have judgment or understanding? were they not made subservient to the will of man? If they are docile and reserved, with enough of judgment to teach them to adorn their persons and wear their jewels with propriety, and never presuming to have a will of their own, follow implicitly the direction of their husbands, studying his temper, and accommodating themselves to his humour, it is all that can be wished for. As to all that you say of the cultivation of their understandings, I can only look upon it as the ravings of a distempered imagination.

Bad as my opinion is of those English Christians, I cannot possibly imagine them to be so absurd as to teach learning to their women. Allowing it possible (which I am very far from allowing) that these creatures, whose sole delight is finery, who were born to amuse, to please, and to continue the race of man, should be capable of entering the sacred porch which leads to the temple of knowledge, what would be the conse-

quence of their being admitted to it? would their steps be steady enough to conduct them through the labyrinths of that awful fane? No. Contenting themselves with the first tinsel ornament that caught their eyes, they would come out at the first opening of vanity; and having made a deposit of their gentleness and humility, would clothe themselves with the robes of arrogance, and rest dauntless upon the hollow reed of self-conceit. Such are the consequences that would result from the foolish attempt of teaching women more than nature designed them to know.

Let Zaarmilla, therefore, hearken to the voice of reason; and at the same time that he gives his sister to be the wife of his friend, let him accept for his spouse the sister of Maandaara. Without being strictly beautiful, her countenance is pleasing: a mole of extreme beauty is seated on her cheek: and her eyes sparkle like the gems of Golconda. She has been taught humility and obedience, and has never conversed

with any man, except her father and her brother. I know so well the tenderness and extreme lenity of thy disposition, that it is necessary to caution thee against extreme indulgence, and to put thee in mind of the words of the sacred Shastra,* which sayeth, 'that a man both day and night must keep his wife so much in subjection, that she by no means be mistress of her own actions. If she have her own free will, notwithstanding her having sprung from a superiour Cast, she will nevertheless act amiss.'

If thou art inclined to dismiss the spirit of delusion, and listen to the voice of thy friend, I will meet thee, not at Ferrockabad, but at Rampore; as though the interest of certain friends I have some hopes given me that Fyzoola Khan may look *upon me* with the eye of kindness, and probably restore me to the possession of my fathers. I have just received intelligence of the arrival of Sheermaal from England; whither he was

* See Halhed's Translation of the Gentoo Laws.

induced to accompany the great man to whose services he had lent the assistance of his abilities; and from him I make no doubt of receiving such information respecting the country he has seen, as will satisfy thy mind and restore thee to the right use of thy understanding.

What can I say more?

LETTER III.

From the SAME *to the* SAME.

THE powerful influence of the *Goitterie*,* which I have employed some expert and holy Fakeers to use, in order to dispossess thy mind from the influence of the magick of the Christians, will, I hope, be aided in their operation by the following account of the observations of Sheermaal, during his abode in England.

If, then, Zaarmilla has any value for the peace of Maandaara, he will instantly quit the wild and fantastick project of seeking for truth in the regions of darkness, and remaining in the land of his fathers, receive

* A Gentoo incantation.

the gifts of happiness into the bosom of content.

Let thine ears now listen to the words of Sheermaal; and from his experience be thou contented to receive the fruits of wisdom.

LETTER IV.

The Bramin Sheermaal *to* Kisheen Neĉay Māandāara.

THE letter of the noble and illustrious Rajah I have read with the most profound respect; and at thy request shall hasten to remove from his eyes the film of prejudice, and to convince him that the opinions he has conceived, concerning the Christians of England, are altogether false and erroneous. I do not wonder, that the enlightened mind of the noble Rajah should have conceived a predilection in favour of a people who seem destined to make so conspicuous a figure in the annals of Asia. As a race of brave and daring mortals, chosen by Veeshnû to curb the fury of destructive tyranny, to blunt the sword of

the destroyer, and break the galling fetters of the oppressed, I, and every Hindoo, must unite with him in pronouncing their eulogium: but as to the principles which actuate their conduct, their religion, their laws, and their manners, the mind of the noble Rajah has been immersed in error.

The learned Pundit, whose fame has extended from the walls of Lucknoo to the banks of Barampooter,* had sufficiently opened my understanding. It became evident, that whatever was in any degree excellent or admirable, throughout the Bobor Logue,† was an emanation from the shadow of wisdom, a ray of light obliquely darting from the sacred volume which issued from the chambers of the deep.‡ To ascertain

* The Translator must acknowledge, that the fame of this learned Pundit has not reached so far as to acquaint her with his name.

† Habitable world.

‡ The Vedas, or Hindoo Scriptures, said in their allegorical mythology to have been recovered from the

the certainty of this truth, I determined to visit the remotest corner of the habitable world, and in the bosom of experience I have found the expected conviction.*

Let not the noble Rajah be deceived. Let him not vainly imagine the Christians to be in possession of such an invaluable treasure as the Shaster he describes; a Shaster promulgating the glorious hopes of immortality; calculated to produce the universal reign of peace and justice, the exercise of the purest benevolence and the most perfect virtue. Let not the Rajah think that the knowledge of such a book as this exists among Christians. If it did, is it possible, that in the ten years in which I

sea, by the God Veeshnû, in the form of a fish; who, after slaying the giant Hayagriva, tore from his belly the sacred volumes which he had profanely swallowed, returned with them in triumph, and presented them to Brahma. A print of Veeshnû performing this ceremony is given in the second volume of Maurice's Indian Antiquities.

* The meaning of the Bramin is rather obscure; it is, however, sufficiently obvious to establish his character as a *systematick traveller*.

have intimately conversed with Christians of all ranks and orders; military commanders, chiefs invested with the powers of civil authority, and men who made the study of literature their employment and delight, is it possible, I say, that I should never once have heard of such a book? Let the noble Rajah be the judge.

That a book of ancient origin, vulgarly called *the bible*, was once known to the English, I have had certain information: but far from containing doctrines of such a nature as the Rajah has announced, the first proof of genius which a young man gives to the world, upon his issuing from the schools, is to speak of it with a becoming degree of contempt. Indeed, to extirpate from society all regard for the pernicious doctrines it contains, has long been the primary object of attention to the enlightened philosophers of Europe. How much the book is detested by these sage philosophers, may easily be inferred, when I declare, that of the many philosophers I have met with, who had most

vehemently spoken and written against it, not one had contaminated himself by deigning to examine its contents. One of these great men, a profound writer of history, has given to the world a work more voluminous than the Mahabbarat, more brilliant than the odes of Sancha, undertaken and accomplished, as I was well assured, with the benevolent purpose of convincing his countrymen of the superiority of the Mahommedan to the Christian faith. Whether these enlightened men will ever really succeed in their intention of establishing the religion of Mahomet in England, is, however, in my opinion, rather doubtful.

However alluring the doctrine of polygamy and the view of the Mahommedan Paradise may be to men of taste and sentiment, there are some obstacles which, I apprehend, would, in the opinion of the people, be insurmountable. The chief of these I take to be the prohibition of wine, the strict fast of Ramozin, and, above all, the

injunctions* concerning the treatment of slaves, which are so mild and generous, that the Christians of England who are concerned in the traffick of their fellow creatures (and who form a large and respectable part of the community) would never be brought to submit to its authority.

From the delusive opinion entertained in the sublime mind of the Rajah, of the religion of the Christians, he will, no doubt, be inclined to imagine, that their philanthropy embraces the wide circle of the human race. How far the rule of 'doing to others as they would be done by, in the like case,' actuates the Christians of England, may be learned from the following history of my voyage.

As I attended the family of a great man, I had the advantage of being accommodated on board one of their ships of war, a huge edifice, whose sides were clothed with thunder. This mighty fabrick contained

* See Sale's Koran, and Hamilton's translation of the Hedeya.

near seven hundred people, governed by a few Chiefs, whose commands were obeyed with the quickness of the lightning's glance, and the frown of whose displeasure was followed by the severity of punishment. We had made two thirds of our voyage to the coast of Britain, when a ship appeared at a distance, which our skilful mariners soon perceived to be in distress. I had so often witnessed what I thought to be the exercise of cruelty during my abode in this sea-borne fortress, that I did not expect the distresses of people, whom they had never seen, would excite much of their compassion. In this, however, I was mistaken. To my astonishment, every effort was instantly made to afford relief to these strangers; and I beheld the toil-strengthened nerves of these lions of the ocean strained by the most vigorous exertions to save the almost sinking vessel. At length the object of their labours was effected; and they, who had been so zealous to save, now appeared perfectly indifferent to the expressions of gratitude and admira-

tion which were poured out by the people whom they had so gallantly delivered from the jaws of destruction. Our carpenter was employed to repair the breaches in the unfortunate vessel. And, as the weather was now calm, curiosity led the principal people of our company to visit the ship of the strangers. I was among the number. But Oh! that I could obliterate from my mind the memory of a scene, the horrours of which no pen can describe, no tongue can utter, no imagination conceive. It was an English vessel, which had been on a voyage to the coast of Africa, from whence it was now proceeding to the British settlements in the West Indies, with a cargo, not of silver and gold, not of costly spices and rich perfumes, but of some hundreds of the most wretched of the human race; a cargo of slaves. These miserable beings were here huddled together in the squalid cells of a moving dungeon. Their uncouth screams, their dismal groans, their countenances, on which were alternately depicted the images of fury, terrour, and

despair, the clanking of their chains, and the savage looks of the white barbarians who commanded them, exhibited such a scene as mocks description.

Surely, the magnanimous Rajah will not imagine, that the perpetrators of this cruelty could be the professors of a religion of mercy. No. Had a ray of knowledge enlightened their understandings, through the tawny hue of the unlettered savage, they would have recognised the emanation of the creating Spirit; they would have perceived the kindred mind, which, in its progressive course through the stages of varied being, might one day inhabit the bodies of their own offspring. For my part, when I contemplated the scene before me, I anticipated, in imagination, the few swiftly rolling years, which might change the abode of the souls of these tyrant whites into the frames of woe-destined negroes; while the present victims of their cruelty would, in their turns, become the masters, and, seizing the scorpion whip of oppression, retaliate their present

sufferings with all the bitterness of revenge. But, alas! the divine doctrine of retribution is unknown to these Christians. No dread of after punishment restrains the remorseless hand of cruelty. No apprehension of the vengeance of an offended Deity diverts them from the greedy pursuits of avarice or disturbs the enjoyments of luxury. For let it not stagger your faith in my veracity, when I inform you, that all this aggregate of human misery is incurred in order to procure a luxurious repast to the pampered appetites of these voluptuaries, and that the unhappy negroes are torn from their country, their friends and families, for no other purpose but to cultivate the sugar-cane; a work of which the lazy Europeans are themselves incapable.

When I mention the slaves of Christians, let not your imagination turn to the bondsmen of Asia, as if their situations were parallel. No. By the mild laws of our Shaster, and even by the less benevolent institutions of Mahommed, slaves are considered

as people who, having bartered their liberty for protection, are entitled to the strictest justice, lenity, and indulgence. They are always treated with kindness, and are most frequently the friends and confidants of their masters. But with these white savages, these merciless Christians, they are doomed to suffer all that cruelty, instigated by avarice and intoxicated by power, can inflict. Ah! beloved Hindostan! happy country! paradise of regions! the plant which in the trans-Atlantick islands is fattened with the blood of the wretched, with thee raises its blooming head, a voluntary offering to thy pure and innocent children. That luscious cane, which the inhabitants of Europe purchase by the enormous mass of misery, is on the banks of the Ganga the exclusive property of the laughing Deity, the heart-piercing Cama; with it the son of Maya forms the bow from which his flowery shafts are thrown at the sons of men:* with it the

* See the Introduction.

blameless hermit approaches the altars of the rural Gods; and from it the simple repasts of the favoured of Veeshnû receive their highest relish.

But my observations on the religion of the people of England stop not here. To obtain complete information upon this subject, was the object I kept perpetually in my view. And I hope it is known to the Rajah, that a Bramin of my character is not easily to be deceived. The custom of dedicating the seventh day to acts of piety and devotion, is mentioned by the Rajah as an institution admirably calculated for keeping up the spirit of a religion, which was intended for the purification of the heart, and of which the duties of penitence and self-examination formed constituent parts. Alas! how grossly has his simplicity been imposed upon. It is indeed observed as a holiday by the lower Casts, and spent by some of the industrious orders of mechanicks in the innocent amusement of walking in the fields, accompanied by their wives and children.

By those of less sober manners, it is employed in the indulgence of gluttony and the most depraved intemperance. By the higher Casts, it is altogether unobserved, except as a day particularly propitious to the purpose of travelling. A select number, from all the different Casts, occasionally amuse themselves by attending, for an hour or two, on the mornings of that day, at certain large buildings, called Churches; a practice which they doubtless continue in conformity to some ancient custom, the origin of which is now forgotten, though the practice continues to be partially observed. Curiosity once led me into one of these churches, where a young man dressed in white began the performance of the ceremony. Had it not been for the carelessness of his manner, I should have been tempted to believe that he was engaged in offering prayers to the Deity; and so far as the extreme rapidity of his utterance would permit me to judge, some things he said so plainly alluded to a future state of existence, that one, less

truly informed than I was, might have been led into a belief that some such notions had actually been entertained among them. The ceremonies of this day were concluded by an elderly priest, in a black robe, who read, in a languid and monotonous tone, from a small book, which he held in his hand, a sort of exhortation; the truths contained in which seemed equally indifferent to himself and to his audience. Nor did the little attention that was paid to his discourse seem to give him any offence, or to impel him to speak in a more energetick manner; though it probably hastened his conclusion; at which he had no sooner arrived, than the countenances of his auditors brightened, and they congratulated one another on their being emancipated from the fatigue of this tiresome ceremony.

Had I never penetrated farther into the character of these Christians, I should have considered them as beings altogether incapable of a serious and profound attention to the performance of any religious duty; but

a deeper investigation convinced me of the contrary, and that in the performance of of such ceremonies as they deemed *of real importance*, these trifling people could evince a degree of assiduity and perseverance that would have done honour to a Sanee assee.*

The rites to which I allude, may, in my opinion, easily be traced to the sacred institutions of the beloved of Brahma; the nation which is the pure fountain of all human wisdom.

To the intelligent mind of the noble Rajah, it is well known how our great ancestors, incomparable in wisdom, ordained such mystical representations of the superiour intelligences, as it is not lawful for any but the most holy and learned of the Bramins to explore. The most pious of the

* A religious recluse.

We are now in possession of so many accurate engravings and minute descriptions of the extraordinary sculpture which decorates the temples of the Hindoos, that there are few readers to whom a detail of them would not be superfluous.

sacred Cast, after purifying themselves from worldly thoughts by years of abstinence, spent in the silence of solemn groves, are, by much application and unwearied study, enabled to perceive the true meaning of those representations hewn in the stupendous rock, or carved in the lofty walls of ancient edifices, which, to the eyes of the vulgar, appear uncouth images of stone. And it is doubtless from this wise example of our ancient Bramins, that the priests of all religions have learned the art of concealing the simplicity of truth under the dark and impenetrable cloud of symbolical mystery, which none but they themselves can fully explain. The knowledge of the vulgar is the death of zeal: But deep is the reverence of ignorance.

It was not, then, from the people engaged in the rites I mention, that I could expect information concerning them: but I had a better instructor in the depth of my own sagacity, which soon taught me, that the object of their most serious devotion was strictly analogous to the symbols of our Dewtah,

not indeed cut in the solid rock of gloomy caverns, not hewn on the walls of sacred temples; but, correspondent to the trifling genius of these silly people, painted upon small slips of stiff paper! Neither is the manner in which these devotions are performed exactly similar to ours. It is not necessary that those devotees should perform the seven ablutions; neither do they rub their bodies with earth; neither do they cover their heads with cow-dung: and, instead of solemn prostration before these painted objects of their idolatry, they take them familiarly into their hands, and toss them one after another upon a table covered with green cloth; turn them up and down, sometimes gazing upon them with momentary admiration, as they lie prostrate on the middle of the table; then again, seizing them with holy ardour, they turn them hastily upon their faces. And to this Poojah* of idols, termed CARDS, do the major part of the people devote their time; sacrificing

* Worship.

every enjoyment of life, as well as every domestick duty, to the performance of this singular devotion.

It is said, that it is incumbent *only* on a 'professed hermit *utterly* to renounce his passions and worldly pursuits: but that it is sufficient for a domestick character to refrain from their abuse.' The zeal for the Poojah of cards inspires a more exalted degree of self-denial: I have known it lead its ardent votaries to exclude the soul-enlivening rays of the golden sun, in the finest evenings of their short-lived summer; and while the nightgale warbled its tale of love to the listening rose, and all the beauties of nature glowed around them, I have beheld them turn from the temptation with heroick firmness, and placing themselves at the altars of their idols remain immoveably fixed in that devotion, which absorbed the powers of their soul.

Little as I am inclined to coincide with the opinion of the Rajah, relative to the superiority of the females of Europe in any other particular, I must confess, that in their

unwearied assiduity to the Poojah of cards, they evince a degree of constancy scarcely exceeded by a pious Yogee* in the act of penance.

The languor, so visible in the countenances of the people assembled in the church, was never to be observed during the performance of this more important ceremony. Here, even the very Priest lost the apathy which had *there* so strongly marked his countenance. The attention of his fellow worshippers was no longer a matter of indifference to him. His zeal was kindled into fervour, and broke forth into the severity of reproach against a female who sat opposite to him, for exhibiting some transient mark of negligence in the performance of the duty in which she was now engaged.

* An order of religious Recluses, remarkable for the rigorous performance of the penitential duties, esteemed by the Hindoos so essentially necessary toward the advancement of their happiness in a future state. The voluntary penances undertaken by these pious Yogees, are frequently so severe as to excite an equal degree of astonishment and horrour.

Universally as the Poojah of cards is established throughout the country, it has not, in the remotest provinces, been able entirely to supersede another species of idolatry, which has clearly and indisputably been borrowed from the manners of their eastern progenitors. This is no other than the worship of certain birds and quadrupeds, which are held so sacred by their worshippers, that the preservation of their lives occupies, I am well assured, many volumes of their laws, and has employed the chief study of their sapient Legislators. I should have wished to obtain much information upon a subject so curious; but all that I could learn, was, that the provincial Rajahs, devoted to the worship of these animals, are mostly sprung from the first Cast. (A certain proof of their Braminical origin.) They despise the vain pursuit of literature; and conscious of their native and inherent superiority, they pique themselves upon their ignorance of all the sciences that are in esteem among the lower orders of men.

From such exalted personages much information was not to be looked for: but a circumstance which occured while I journeyed over the remote parts of the kingdom, threw sufficient light upon the subject.

In one particular, however, the higher Casts in that country must be acknowledged to differ widely from the race of Brahma.—They are deficient in hospitality! Never did I see the doors of a great man open to receive the wearied traveller: the milk of his cows flows not into the stranger's dish. Nay, so very rude and inhospitable are the manners of the people of high Cast, that once upon a time, when, being overtaken by darkness in a rainy evening, I attempted to procure lodgings for myself and my attendant, at the house of one of these provincial Rajahs, which was situate near the road, I was not only denied admittance, but repulsed with the language of contempt, and necessitated to continue my route, in a dark and stormy evening, till the sight of a peasant's hut cheered my heart with the hope of shelter. I was not disappointed; for in this country the

spirit of hospitality is only to be found beneath a roof of thatch. The decent matron, who inhabited this lowly hut, received me with looks of cordial welcome. Five blooming children surrounded the blazing fire, whose cheerful light was reflected from the bright utensils that adorned the white washed walls. My first appearance dismayed the little train, but some candied sweetmeats, with which I presented them, quickly reconciled them to my complexion. The genii, who delight to revel in the troubled air, howled around this humble dwelling, and pouring the dashing torrent from the black-bosomed clouds of night, they heard with joy the thunder's roar while nimbly following the lightning's flash, they exulted in the mingled tempest. The pale hue of terrour sat upon the matron's cheek: she listened, with anxiety and impatience, for the voices of her husband and her son, who were not yet returned from the labours of the day: and while her own fears increased with the horrours of the tempest, she employed

herself in appeasing those of the infant group, who clung to her, demanding, with accents of clamorous sorrow, the return of their father and their brother.

When the storm a little abated of its violence, the little creatures ran by turns to the door, eagerly peeping into the dark abyss of night, in hopes of discovering their approach. The anxious mother added fuel to the already blazing fire; again she swept the unsoiled hearth; and again adjusted the chairs, which had long been placed for the reception of the supporters of her hope. At length, the well known steps were heard; every heart fluttered with joy, and every little hand was stretched out, eager to receive the paternal and fraternal embrace. The old man and his son were for some time occupied in returning the caresses of their family; which they did with the tenderness of affection: and then the venerable master of this humbled abode came forward to welcome me to a share of the comforts it afforded. He had looked at me earnestly for some time,

when, to my utter astonishmenf, he addressed me in my native language. The Mhors he spoke was but indifferent, but it was intelligible, and more charming to my ears than the musick of the seven genii.

In order to account for what appeared to me such an extraordinary phenomenon, he told me that, in early life, he had been tempted, by the God of Love, to win the affections of a damsel, whose beauty had touched the heart of the village Lord. The place of wife, in the establishment of this great man, was already occupied by the daughter of a neighbouring Rajah; but he had probably been convinced, by the philosophers, of the propriety of the system of Mahommet; and thought that the damsel, though the daughter of a mechanick, would be no unworthy ornament of his zenana. It is not to be wondered at that he should be filled with indignation at the presumption of the young peasant, who dared to interfere with his pleasures, and disappoint his schemes, by marrying the object of his hopes. It is not pro-

per that inferiours should be permitted to defeat the intentions of their Lords with impunity. This great man was of the same opinion; and, in the height of his resentment against his successful rival, he had him torn from the arms of his bride, and sent in a company of soldiers, who were all collected in the same arbitrary manner (probably as a punishment for the same sort of offence) to the East Indies. Here this unfortunate martyr to love spent eleven years in the service of the Company, in the rank of a petty officer: when having, by his economy, saved a sum sufficient for the purposes of humble competence, he obtained leave to return to his native country. As the gay pennant, though forced to obey the pressure of the changeful breeze, still clings to its beloved mast, and, at the return of every short-lived calm, flutters round the object to which it was in youth united; so the heart of this honest peasant, in all the storms of fortune, hovered round the cottage that contained his wife and child. At length, her obscure re-

tirement was gladdened by his presence. By the employment of her needle, she had procured, during his absence, an honourable and virtuous subsistence for herself and son. The little fortune he had brought from India was lost by the villainy of the agent into whose hands he had entrusted it. But in the endearments of mutual affection, this honest couple had a fund of felicity, which the malice of fortune could not destroy. Both the good man and his son found employment for their industry in cutting down the trees of a neighbouring wood: a work which had been committed to their care, and amply recompensed their diligence. When they returned from their labour, the cheerful appearance of the well-ordered family at home, the smiling welcome of the little innocents, and the affectionate tenderness of the worthy matron, presented to them a reward which went farther than the gifts of fortune have power to penetrate :—it reached the heart.

The recital of these circumstances was made to me during the most cheerful repast that I ever saw Christians partake of. When it was ended, a ceremony ensued, which having never seen practised at any other period, I have reason to think *peculiar to themselves.* Upon a hint from the old soldier, his eldest daughter presented him with a very large book, from which, with a clear and solemn voice, he read some admirable instructions and exhortations. The sublime and commanding energy with which these precepts were expressed, might lead to a conclusion, that this was a copy of the same Shaster with which the departed Saib Percy presented the learned Rajah: but many obstacles oppose themselves to this supposition. Could we believe that a book of such distinguished authority, unheard of among the learned and totally unknown among the superiour Casts, should yet be found familiar in the cottage of a peasant? It is too absurd for the shadow of probability to rest upon.

But to return to the religious rites of these simple people; which, as I have observed, differ essentially from all that had hitherto come within my observation: for instead of the Poojah of cards, which at that hour would have been performed in the families of the higher Casts, when the old man had shut the book, he knelt down, his wife and blooming infants following his example. The latter clasped their little hands and held them up to heaven, while he lifted up his voice, calling upon the unseen, omniscient, and immortal Preserver, to bless them, and to accept from hearts of gratitude the offering of praise and thankfulness. I cannot account for it, but there was something in this whole ceremony which greatly affected my mind; and I could not help, while I listened to the simple but fervent devotion of this virtuous labourer, feeling for him a degree of veneration, even superiour to what I had experienced for the Priest, whose zeal had been so conspicuous at the Poojah of cards.

In the morning, the same rites were again repeated; after which, I took leave of this innocent and happy family; the old man insisting that, as I had come some miles out of my way, his son should accompany me to the village where I had directed my servant and horse to meet me. The lad willingly obeyed the commands of his father, and we set out together. He was a handsome youth, of about twenty years of age, and of a sensible and intelligent countenance. Taking a path through a corn field, it being now the latter end of harvest, we met a young peasant, who carried a gun, which he frequently fired to frighten the crows and other birds from the grain. My companion took the weapon of destruction into his hand to examine it: and in that unhappy moment, in which the Goddess of Mischance presided, a group of partridges appeared before him: he involuntarily struck the flint; the report resounded through the air, and oh! unfortunate destiny, seven of these sacred birds were laid rolling in the dust. He had no

time to consider of the fatal deed; for, in a moment, two men, whom the bushes had concealed from our view, darted on the guilty youth, wrested the weapon of destruction from his trembling hand, and, with many imprecations of vengeance, insisted upon his immediately attending them before the awful tribunal of assembled Magistrates, who were now exercising the sacred functions of their office in the neighbouring village. It was then I learned the real magnitude of my friend's offence. For I was then informed, that to preserve these sacred birds from being injured by the unhallowed hands of any of the lower Cast, the severest laws were promulgated: and as the Zimeendars in the office of the magistracy, before whom these offences were tried, were all of them worshippers of the rural Dewtah, they never suffered the stern sentence of justice to be softened at the suggestion of mercy.

As it is not good to forsake a friend in his adversity, we entered the temple of justice together. In this awful tribunal, seated in

two large chairs, we found the offended Magistrates. The first of these judges seemed fully conscious of his dignity, which was indeed very great, uniting in himself the triple offices of Priest, Zimeendar, and Magistrate of the place. The other was a Pundit, learned in the law; called, in the language of these people, an attorney. No sooner did the witnesses of my friend's guilty deed present the unhappy culprit before them, producing at the same time the murdered birds and the destructive engine of their dissolution, than the murmur of indignation arose; the cause in which they were then hearing evidence was instantly dismissed: it was, indeed, only concerning a man who was said to have beaten his wife almost to death: a trifling crime, in the eyes of these Magistrates, when compared to the murder of seven partridges!

The son of the soldier attempted to speak in his own defence, but was prevented by the first judge, who declared that the proof was sufficient for his condemnation, and

that he never would hear any thing in favour of A POACHER: (a name given by this sect to the enemies of their idolatry.) From the tone of wrath with which he pronounced these words, I saw that the young man's fate was determined; and when, after some consultation between themselves, the younger judge arose to pronounce his sentence, I expected, with sorrow, to have heard the irrevocable mandate of immediate death; and knowing how vindictive the priests of all religinos usually are toward those who have treated with contempt the objects of their superstitious veneration, I should have been well pleased to have compounded for his simple death, unattended by the tortures which I feared might be inflicted on him, for a crime which, I plainly saw, was thought of by his judges with horrour. Judge then what a mixture of astonishment and delight, I heard the mild and merciful sentence uttered by the Pundit, which pronounced no other sentence of punishment, but that of paying a sum of money!

How universal is the sin of ingratitude? When I expected to behold this young man embracing the feet of his merciful judges with grateful rapture, I heard him, with astonishment, venture to expostulate with his benefactors upon his utter inability to pay so great a fine. He mentioned the situation of his parents; said they depended upon his labour for support; and that, should his judges persevere in inflicting the payment of so large a sum upon him, it must deprive them of his assistance; or, by robbing them of the little savings of their industry, reduce their young ones to penury, and cause them to eat the bread of bitterness in their old age. 'Let pity for my aged parents induce you to soften the rigour of my sentence,' cried the ungrateful youth, 'and, though a thousand partridges were to start up before me, I swear I shall never injure one feather of their wings.' Alas! his eloquence was lost. The judges remained inexorable: till at length, being touched with the sorrow of the young man, I resolved to address them in

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the best English I was master of. 'Mild, upright, and merciful judges,' cried I, 'believe not that I speak to excuse the crime of which this young man has been guilty. No. I have ever been taught to pay respect to the Dewtahs of whatever country I was in. With the Persick Magi I have bent in solemn adoration of the solar orb; while, with other equally enlightened nations of the east, I have demonstrated my respect for the crocodile, the jackall, and the monkey. Since fate has brought me into this renowned kingdom, I have, in the great capital, attended, with due solemnity, the Poojah of cards: and now, that I am made acquainted with the religion of the Rajahs of the provinces, I judge of your feelings, most venerable Magistrates, upon the present occasion, by what my own would have been, had any base-born Sooder dared to lift his impious hands against one of the sacred cows, who range the flowery meads of Burrampooter. But since, in the overflowing of your clemency, you have condescend

ed to limit the deserved punishment of this audacious youth to the payment of a fine, I hope you will extend the shadow of your goodness so far, as to accept the money from a stranger.' They stared at one another, astonished, no doubt, at the boldness of my speech; but, nevertheless, were so kind as graciously to accept of the gold I offered them, and to suffer my companion to depart with me in peace.

After giving him some good advice against meddling, in future, with the Dewtah of the country, and presenting him with some pieces of gold for his family, I dismissed him, and proceeded on my journey.

In the course of this tour, I had the courage to penetrate into the northern regions of this united kingdom of Britain, where mountains, more stupendous than those of Upper Tartary, heave their bare brown backs to the merciless arrows of the keen-edged wind: where the bright-faced luminary of heaven is wrapt in the eternal veil of clouds and storms; but where, in the uncultivated bosom

of heath-covered desarts, resides a people whose origin is more ancient than the rocks whose gloomy summits overhang their dwellings.

It was with a view of gaining some information in regard to the chronology of this ancient nation, that I was induced to visit it I had heard that the original Casts into which these, as well as other nations, had been divided at their creation, were here preserved in their original purity and perfection. For this is another particular, in which the Rajah of Almorah has been grossly deceived or misinformed. Instead of being all of *one* Cast, as he imagines, the people throughout Great Britain are divided into *three* Casts, all seperate, and distinct from each other; and which are commonly known by the several appellations of PEOPLE OF FAMILY, PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY, and PEOPLE OF STYLE, or fashion. The first two are of much more ancient origin than the other Cast; which, indeed, appears to have sprung from an unnatural mixture of

the others; like the trides of* Buhran Sunker, in Hindostan. But what is extraordinary, and entirely peculiar to the Cast of *people of style*, is, that admission may be obtained by those who were not born in it, nay, who have sprung from the lowest of the tribe, called PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY; and these people, thus admitted, I have ever observed to be most tenacious of the rights and privileges of their new Cast, treating those who still remain in that which they have left with the utmost contempt, breaking off all connexion with them, and frequently denying (particularly in the presence of other *people of fashion*) that they ever had any acquaintance with them: an asseveration always made with peculiar warmth, when these newly made *people of fashion* are known to be under any particular obligations to the PEOPLE OF NO FAMILY. The mode of initiation into this Cast, I suppose to be made by the ceremonies of ablution: and certain

* See Gentoo Laws, page 43.

streams and springs, of mysterious efficacy, are to be found in various parts of the kingdom; where I have reason to think the ceremonies of initiation are usually performed. A resort to these springs, called watering-places, at certain seasons of the year, being prescribed to *people of style*, and all the candidates for that Cast, as an indispensible duty.

Among these candidates, the most certain method of procuring success, is an assiduous devotion to the Poojah of cards: liberal offerings of gold, at the altars of these little painted idols, having frequently procured the honours of initiation, to the most low-born, low-bred, and illiterate personages in the community. The flood of wealth, which the golden stream of commerce has diffused over the kingdom of England, has greatly contributed to the exaltation of this upstart tribe: but in the northern kingdom, which is now blended with it (as Bahar is with Orissa) the barrier between *people of family* and *people of no family*, has been too strong for the

tide of wealth to break, too powerful for the teeth of time to destroy. I was extremely anxious to gain an insight into the chronological annals of this most ancient nation, but could obtain none that was any wise satisfactory. By a strange custom, the cultivation of letters is confined to the *people of no family*, who are at no pains to trace the origin of the first Cast beyond that of their own; but by my own observation, confirmed by the hints I received from all the *people of family* with whom I conversed; it is evident that a period of many thousand years must have elasped between the creation of the two casts. Indeed, to believe that the venerable and exalted cast of *people of family* should have sprung from one common parent with the *people of no family*, is equally absurd as to suppose, that in the revolution of the few years that are doomed to terminate a transient and uncertain existence they should moulder into the same sort of dust! Base slander on the inherent superiority of birth! The minds of the *people of family* are filled

with too just an idea of their own dignity to admit so injurious a supposition. Conscious of the blessing of superiour origin, the ancient Rajahs, and all who can boast a portion of their blood, never fail to express a proper degree of contempt for the people of inferiour Cast; nor can the possession of talents, the attainments of science, or the exercise of the sublimest virtue, serve, in any degree, in their eyes, to lessen the invincible barrier that divides them.

Together with the cultivation of letters, the exercise of the Priestly function is usually confined to the second Cast. These men are more distinguished for the regularity of their lives, and sanctity of their deportment, than for their dexterity at the Poojah of cards, which in the southern part of ths kingdom is so essential a requisite in the duty of a priest. The ceremonies of their religion are somewhat similar to those of the cottager; they are no strangers to the duties of hospitality, and recommend the enlightening study of literature both by their precept and

example. In all other respects, the characteristick virtues and peculiar customs of this nation, are so evidently of Hindoo origin, that nothing but the most wilful blindness could make any one assert the contrary.

As the illustrious Rajahs of Hindostan when sitting in the midst of their wide-extended possessions, forgot not to bend before the Bramin, who, to procure nourishment for his family, laboureth in his garden, in like manner the people of whom I speak, retain the dignity of their Cast, even when compelled by poverty to exercise any trade in order to procure a livelihood: and as in India members of the tribe of Brahma are frequently found exercising the employments of commerce and agriculture, so in this ancient nation do *people of family* often condescend to become weavers, shoemakers, and barbers, without forfeiting Cast, or in the least abating of the high idea of their own inherent superiority. It is not so with *the people of style*, who by entering into any of these employments lose all the privileges of their

Cast; a circumstance which occasions numbers of the poorer branches of that tribe to live in a humiliating state of dependence upon the richer, rather submitting to any indignity than run the risk of *losing Cast* by submitting to work for their own subsistence.

The mode of living among these people, in which animal food is scarcely known, is another argument in favour of their Hindoo origin. Much might likewise be said of the similarity of sound between Laird and Rajah; a similarity, which, in the opinion of learned antiquarians, is more than sufficient to establish an etymology. Nor is this all; like us, they consider themselves a *distinct* and *favoured people*, superiour to the rest of the inhabitants of the earth, and do not fail to maintain, that whatever instances of courage, magnanimity, or heroick virtue, are displayed by any inhabitant of the other nations of the world, would, in similar circumstances, have been far exceeded by one of their own countryman.

These highly favoured people being too tenacious of their dignity to admit strangers (with whose pedigree they are unacquainted) into the honour of their society; the person to whom I was chiefly indebted for information was the lady, at whose house I lodged. She was of the *people of family* Cast, sprung from an illustrious race; her fifteenth grandfather had been a mountain Rajah; and, in the ramifications of his blood, she could boast a degree of affinity to one-and-twenty Lairds! She was forced, by the dictates of necessity, to make up articles of female attire for her maintenance, but never worked, as she herself assured me, for any but *people of her own Cast;* and I was induced to believe her, from the marked contempt with which I observed her treat all who had the misfortune to be born *people of no family.* This was particularly felt by a young woman of beautiful person, gentle manners, and good education, whom this high-born female, being equally ignorant of orthography and arithmetick, was under the necessity of employ-

ing as an assistant in her business: and whose conversation, had it not been for the difference of the Casts from which they sprung, I should have greatly preferred to that of her mistress; but the cousin of one-and-twenty mountain Rajahs had too just a claim to my veneration, to be put in competition with the paltry advantages of youth, beauty, talents, and understanding!

It was in this house I observed, with pleasure, the practice of that admirable degree of abstemiousness, the reverse of which had, in the southern part of the island, so frequently excited the feelings of horrour and disgust. The servants of this illustrious Bibby did not sit down together to excite one another to acts of gluttony and intemperance: but after long and rigorous abstinence, they snatched the scanty morsel of simple viands which their prudent mistress had allotted for them; nor, even at her own table, did I ever see a meal displayed, of which the most holy Fakeer might not have partaken without breaking his vows of self-denial!

Thus hath thy servant clearly refuted two of the propositions of the misguided Rajah; and proved, in the most satisfactory manner, and from the most undoubted authority, that if such a Shaster as he speaks of *ever did exist*, it is now become altogether *obsolete* and entirely unknown; that the only devotion known to the majority of the community, is the Poojah of cards, and Partridges; and that the people of Great Britain are, at this day, divided into separate Casts, as distinct from each other as the Bramin from the Kettrie.

There are other errours into which the noble Rajah has suffered his mind to be led, which I could with equal ease refute, did I not know how easily the mind of a great man is disgusted by prolixity.

What can I say more!

LETTER V.

From the Bramin *to* Maandaara.

Let the commands of Maandaara be obeyed. In the plenitude of my desire to open the eyes of your misguided friend, I hasten to proceed to a more particular description of the education and manners of the females of England; which the illustrious Rajah has so erroneously conceived to be in some measure influenced by the doctrines of that obsolete Shaster, which seems to exalt the dignity of the female mind to an equality with that of the lords of the creation.

I shall begin with an account of the usual mode of conducting the education of females in England. How far that is of a nature calculated for 'lighting the torch of reason

and expanding the germ of intellect,' let the wisdom of the Rajah decide!

During the period of infancy these Christian females (whose souls are, in the erring mind of Zaarmilla, deemed so precious) are permitted to receive their first ideas from mercenary attendants, always ignorant, and frequently vicious. When the rising plant puts forth the tendrils of curiosity, which may at pleasure be directed to the tree of knowledge, or suffered to twine round the hollow bamboo of prejudice and folly: at that period, lest from the conversation of fathers or brothers these young females might, peradventure, acquire some degree of information, they are removed from the possibility of such deplorable consequences, and placed where science, reason, and common sense, dare not to intrude. In these Seminaries, far from being treated as 'beings, whose intellectual faculties are capable of progressive improvement through the ages of eternity,' their time is solely employed in learning a few tricks, such as a monkey

might very soon acquire, and these are called accomplishments!

Judge how ridiculous it would be to make creatures, believed to be accountable to their creator for the employment of their talents and the improvement of their virtues, spend the most precious years of life in running their fingers over certain bits of wood, which are so contrived as to make a jingling sort of noise, pleasant enough when one is a little accustomed to it, but which, in the manner executed by them, very seldom equals what is every day to be heard from the itinerant musicians that practice in the streets!

Another ingenious contrivance for filling up that portion of time, which the friend of Maandaara supposes to be employed in the acquisition of useful knowledge, is, by the assistance of a master (whose attendance is paid for at a vast expense) making wretched imitations of trees, and flowers, and this is called *learning to paint!* It appears as if great care was taken to avoid the possibility

of the female pupils ever arriving at any degree of perfection in the art, as I am well-informed that not one in five hundred is ever capable of copying from nature, or of doing any thing, when left to herself, that is not many degrees inferiour to the little pictures which may be purchased for the value of a rupee.

Another indispensible part in the education of females of every Cast, of every rank, and in every situation, is the knowledge of the language spoken in their neighbouring nation. I was for some time at a great loss to know what reason could be assigned for so strange a custom, and after many conjectures, I rested in the belief, that as the French nation was frequently at war with the English, it might either be customary to send the women as Hircarrahs* into the camp of the enemy, or, in case of defeat, to employ them in procuring terms of peace, which from the remarkable complaisance of

* Spies.

their adversaries to the female sex, it might be supposed, would be negociated by the Bibbys with peculiar advantage to their country. I was, however, forced to give up this conclusion, on being assured, that after years spent in the study of the language, as it is taught at these excellent Seminaries, few are capable of reading, and still fewer of conversing, with any degree of fluency in this tongue: and that the only real advantage resulting from it was, that by what they knew of it, they were enabled to understand the peculiar terms belonging to the articles of dress imported from that country, which had an acknowledged right of imposing its fashions on the other nations of Europe.

Dress is, indeed, *one* science in which full scope is given to the faculties of these females: and the love of it, is, at the great Schools of the Christians, so successfully inculcated, that it remains indelible to the latest period of life. Nor is the mode of education I speak of confined solely to the

children of the higher Casts, it extends to all, even to the daughters of tradesmen and mechanicks, who are employed, during the years of improvement, exactly in the manner I have described. All the difference is, that at inferiour Schools, where inferiour masters are employed, the girls do not, perhaps, arrive at the art of running their fingers over the bits of wood, called Keys of a Harpsichord, with an equal degree of velocity; they make rather more execrable copies of more wretched pictures, and the knowledge they acquire of the French language does not, perhaps, enable them to run over the names of the new fashions with an equal degree of volubility; but as to making any attempt at instructing the daughters of Christians, in any thing useful to themselves or society, the idea would be deemed equally ridiculous in Seminaries of every class.

So far all is right. We behold women moving in their proper sphere, learning no other art, save that of adorning their persons; and inspired with no other view, but that

of rendering themselves objects of pleasure to the eyes of men. But how shall I astonish you, when I unfold the extreme inconsistency of the foolish Europeans, and inform you, that these uninstructed women are frequently suffered to become entirely their own mistresses; sometimes entrusted with the management of large estates, and left at liberty to act for themselves! Nay, that it is no uncommon thing for a man, who may, in other respects, by no means be considered as a fool, to leave his children to the care of his widow, by which means I have frequently seen a little family cast upon the care, and depending for protection, on a poor, pretty, helpless being, incapable of any idea, save that of dress, or of any duty, except the Poojah of cards! How much wiser is the institution of Brahma, by which creatures, incapable of acting with propriety for themselves, are effectually put out of the way of mischief, by being burned with the bodies of their husbands. Wise regulations!

Laudable practice! by which the number of *old women* is so effectually diminished!

From what I have formerly said, you will observe, that women do actually sometimes carry on certain branches of trade; but to infer from this, that they are generally esteemed capable of business, or receive such an education as to enable them, if left destitute of the gifts of fortune, to enter into it, would be doing them great injustice. No, in that country, as well as in this, all men allow that there is nothing so amiable in a woman as the *helplessness* of *mental imbecility;* and even the women themselves are so well convinced of this, that they would consider it as an insult to be treated like rational creatures. The love of independence is, therefore, a masculine virtue, and though some few females are *unamiable* enough to dare to enter upon some employment for their support, this conduct is very much discouraged, and not only properly discountenanced by the men, but held in abhorrence by all women who entertain a

proper sense of the amiableness of female weakness. The females who belong to the Cast of *people* of *style*, are particularly zealous in reprobating the exertions of female industry, and are careful to employ *men* only in all these branches in which fortuneless women have audaciously endeavoured to procure subsistence; for this reason, when a family, by any of those misfortunes occurring in a commercial country, happen to be reduced to poverty, the daughters of the family are either left a prey to gaunt-eyed indigence, or doomed to eat the bitter bread of dependance, administered with sparing hand and grudging heart by some cold relative! Equally ignorant, and equally helpless, as the females of Hindostan, their situation is far more destitute and pitiable. By the admirable institutions of our laws, it is ordained 'that a woman shall by no means be left to herself, but that, in case her nearest relations are incapable of taking care of her, that duty shall devolve upon the Ma-

gistrate.'* But among the Christians of England they are as destitute of protection as of instruction.

The misguider of the mind of Zaarmilla, has, it must be confessed, mixed some truth with the abundance of his falsehoods. When he told him, that it was customary in his country to teach women to read and write, he did not advance the thing which was not. It is true, that they are actually taught both, though for what purpose those keys of knowledge are put into their hands, it is not easy to imagine; few bad consequences, however, are found to result from this practice, as it is in general so wisely managed as to be very little prejudicial to the interests of ignorance; and is seldom employed for any other purpose than that of reading motly tales of love and murder, of which care is taken to furnish them with an abundant supply, from certain storehouses of trash, called circulating libraries.

* See Gentoo Laws.

The system of female education, such as I have described, is now almost universally practised over the island of Great Britain; though I have heard that, till lately, a system of a different nature was prevalent in the northern part of the united kingdom. There, instead of the Poojah of cards, it was then customary for the mothers of families to employ themselves in the education of their children, in teaching their daughters the duties of domestick life, and in instilling into their tender minds the principles of piety and virtue. Beneath a mother's eye, the young females were then sent to certain places of instruction, called Day schools, accompanied by their brothers; a practice which would inevitably lay the foundation of a degree of fraternal affection, inconsistent with that sort of reserved and austere demeanour, which it is so proper for men to observe toward their female relatives. Nor was this the only bad consequence resulting from the practice of sending boys and girls to the same School. In the pure hearts of

the little innocents, attachments were often formed; which, in the minds of the young females, excited such a wish to excel, in order to render themselves amiable in the eyes of their little friends, as was altogether incompatible with the preservation of ignorance. Nor did the evil stop here; being habituated to consider their young schoolfellows in the light of brothers, they had none of that restraint, which, before company, seals the lips of the Boarding-school Bibbys, but behaved with the frankness that is natural to the pure in heart. By early discipline, their minds received such an odious degree of firmness, as often enabled them to sustain, with dignity, the most bitter decrees of adverse fortune, and their bodies acquired such a repulsive degree of health, as rendered them equal to the discharge of every active duty. All these multifarious evils are now no longer to be apprehended; the system of their southern neighbours is now, I am well assured, practised with so much success, that the daugh-

ter of a *mountain Rajah*, will soon be as amiably frivolous, as engagingly ignorant; as weak in body and in mind, as the pupil of the greatest Boarding School in London.

There are other instances in which these females of England, whom the infatuated Rajah has represented to himself 'as exalted in the scale of being to the rank of rational, as capable of receiving the pure principles of virtue, and of steadily performing the various and complicated duties of life,' are treated in a manner at which the soul of humanity revolts. Thousands, and ten thousands, of these Christian women, being yearly suffered to perish in the streets of their great metropolis, under the accumulated misery of want, disease, and infamy!

We now think with horrour, of the blood-stained altars of the ancient groves, where, to appease the wrath of the black Goddess,*

* Callee, or the Black Goddess, is exhibited in the Indian temples with a collar composed of golden skulls, as descriptive of the dreadful sacrifices in which she took delight. The timid and benign character of the Hindoos,

it was permitted that human victims should be immolated: we paint to ourselves the agonizing feelings of the parent, when the blooming virgin was led forth, presenting a spotless offering to the sacrificial knife; and, sickening at the thought, we give praise to the adored Veeshnû, at whose commands these horrid rites were terminated. But callous and unfeeling Englishmen! they endure to behold with their own eyes, sacrifices in one year exceeding in number, all that, in the course of revolving years, perished on the altars of Asia! sacrifices, not immolated to appease the wrath of their infernal Dewtahs, but victims of the licentious passions of unprincipled men! and yet many of these men are so absurd as to pretend to sensibility: nay, so much is their conduct at war with their professions, that I have

has induced many to doubt in the possibility of these horrid rites having ever been practised in India; but the proofs that are given in many of the Shanscrit writings, of human sacrifices offered, in remote ages, to this truly infernal deity, seem too strong to be refuted.

heard them declaim, with apparent horrour, against the holy ceremony of the virtuous widow throwing herself upon the funeral pile of her deceased Lord. Yes, I have seen those, who could witness the scene of misery exhibited in their own streets without betraying one symptom of compassion, affect to shed tears of pity at the description of a Hindoo female's voluntary sacrifice, by which she attained glory here, and had the certainty of happiness hereafter! Is it thus, by a pretended feeling for imaginary sorrows, that the Christian Shaster teaches men to exercise their benevolence? Is it in conformity to any part of *its* precepts, that they can so freely grieve at equivocal and distant evils, while those which are before their eyes excite neither compassion nor remorse?

However unfeeling others might be to the misery of the wretched females, one would think that the voice of nature in a father's breast would cry aloud to save his offspring from a fate so dreadful; but, deaf

to her pleadings, parents themselves do not hesitate to devote the unhappy victims, by means of an education which conducts them step by step from vanity to vice, reconciling themselves to all its direful consequences, by a repetition of the cabalistick word GENTEEL, which has such a magical charm as to change, in their opinion, the very nature of every species of madness, vice and folly!

Can a mind, pure and intelligent as that of Zaarmilla, delight to dwell with such a people? Is it from such a polluted stream that the descendant of a thousand Rajahs would wish to imbibe knowledge? Foolish project! Perverted ambition! How many choice morsels of Shanscrit literature lie mouldering in the temples of Benares, which he may rescue from the ravages of devouring worms, and be repaid with the words of wisdom. Hath the shallow invention of Europeans conceived any work equal to the Mahhabarat? Can the aphorisms of their philosophers be compared with the Heetopades of Veeshnoo Sarma? or the

imagination of their poets vie in lofty imagery, or sublime expression, with the beautiful dramas of the immortal Calidas? Doth the wisdom-loving Rajah delight to tread the maze of logick? Let him seek for gratification in the Persian writings of the Mussulmans, which, though scarcely lawful for a Hindoo to peruse, are yet to be preferred to the absurd writings of Christian philosophers.

Which of the lawyers of Europe has shewn himself more expert in involving the simplicity of truth in the deep mazes of perplexity, than the Imaum Aboo Yooseff, and the more illustrious philosopher Ib'n Edrees al Shaffie?* What king of Europe could ever boast of a Minister equal to that Golden Pillar who supported the throne of the renowned Ackbar? Or who, in modern times, can, among them, be compared with the Great Eradut Khan Waseh? The memoirs, written by that Nobleman, is a gem of such

* See Preliminary Discourse to the Hedaya.

transcendent worth and lustre, that its imitation as far exceeds the abilities of the puny Nobles of Europe, as does the unshaken fidelity and magnanimous heroism of the illustrious writer. In truth, there was no point in which I was more disappointed, than in the state of learning in England. By multitudes of the people of that country, the name of Abul Fazel has never been heard! I conversed with many, to whom the renown of Veias was unknown, and can with truth aver, that numbers, who have the character of *learned*, are yet so very ignorant, as not to know whether the great city of Canouge was founded by a Hindoo or a Mussulman!

With regard to the political state of Great Britain, its laws, and form of government, I am not qualified to speak with certainty; never having been able to find any two people of the same opinion with respect to any of these points. One circumstance alone appeared to be irrefragably

established; and this is a circumstance so extraordinary that it deserves attention.

Know, then, that the Visier, or first Minister, to the king of Great Britain, is, at all times, the weakest and most wicked man in the kingdom, and that there is not a man in England, however incapable of managing with propriety the simplest concerns of private life, who is not much better qualified than the Minister to conduct the complex and extensive business of a great nation. You may, perhaps, be inclined to doubt the truth of this assertion; but when I inform you, that I repeat it not from vague report, but from the reiterated and solemn asseverations of the people I have alluded to, the point will appear incontrovertibly established.

I herewith send, for the gratification of your curiosity, a specimen of the painted idols of the Europeans, the examination of which has lately employed much of my time. A rich field of conjecture is already opened, to the culture of which I shall wil-

lingly devote some of the remaining years of my existence. That the origin of the rites of these divinities may be traced to the favoured country of Brahma, will not admit of a doubt. The flower, which one of the Goddesses carries in her hand, bears such a striking resemblance to the Lotos, that, at first sight, any impartial person must recognise the adored figure of the bounteous Ganga. If any one of the figures has any claim to European origin, it is that of *Knave;* but who ever heard of a *King of hearts* in the history of any nation of Europe? In the course of a few years investigation, I do not despair to prove the real family of every one of these painted idols; and in the prosecution of this laborious work, I shall not disdain to imitate the method pursued by the antiquarians of England, for 'wise men will not disdain to learn, even from the counsel of fools.' I recommend thee to the protection of Veeshnû, and the favour of all the inferiour Gods.

What can I say more?

LETTER VI.

Third Letter of the Bramin.

BEFORE the delivery of my letter into the hands of the Dauk,* I resolved to re-examine the counsellors of memory, lest any circumstance, that would have influence to enlighten the mind of the noble Rajah, should, unfortunately, have been omitted. It was a happy precaution! By it I am enabled to add to the proofs I have already given of the Braminical origin of the English nation, one other proof, which establishes the opinion of the Pundit beyond the reach of human controversy.

Let it be known then to the friend of Maandaara, that the performance of the ce-

* Messenger.

remony of the Purekah* is known to the Christian, and so much is the practice of its mysterious rites encouraged, that the most trifling and insignificant disputes are frequently referred to its decision: as, for example, in speaking of the colour of the eyes of a dancing-girl, one man should say that they were black, and another aver them to be blue, the common method of deciding the dispute (either between *people* of *style*, or such as pant for admission into that honourable Cast) is the performance of Purekah. The method of performing this sublime ceremony, is not, it is true, exactly similar, in all respects, to that which is so piously observed in India. A little consideration on the genius of the people and their deficiency in religious knowledge, will, however, account for the difference. In England, I never heard that the performers of the Purekah took the precaution of preparing themselves for the award of fate, by

* Trial by Ordeal, still practiced in Hindostan.

the observance of long and rigourous abstinence; or that they were particularly assiduous in their acts of devotion; or that they bound themselves by any oath before the Magistrate to abide by the infallible decision of the gods. All these preparatory duties are, by these trifling people, altogether omitted, and the ceremony itself, instead of being performed in the presence of the Magistrate and the assembled people, is usually gone through under the immediate inspection of only *two witnesses.** In the Purekah of the English, they neither thrust their hands into vessels filled with boiling oil, nor do they say to the Balance, 'thou, O Balance, art the mansion of truth, thou wast anciently contrived by Deities. If I am guilty, O, venerable as my own mother, sink me down; but if innocent, raise me aloft in air.' Neither do they swallow poison, nor cast an Idol into the water, nor take into their hands

* For an account of the Indian Ordeal, in which all these methods are mentioned, see Asiatick Researches vol. ii.

the red hot iron, nor make any use of the seven leaves of the trembling Pippel, or the seven blades of Dharba grass; but by means of the diminutive *Agnee Astors*, called Pistols, the two disputants attempt to convey little leaden bullets into one another's bowels, or brains. In the opinion of some philosophers, a worthless fellow will continue to be as much a worthless fellow after the performance of the Purekah as before; but in the opinions of the performers themselves, it has efficacy to change the nature of guilt, and to wash away the foulest spot of dishonour.

What can I say more!

LETTER VII.

Seeta Juin Zaarmilla, *Rajah of Almora*; to Kisheen Neaay Maandaara, *Zimeendar of Cumlore*.

I bow with reverence to Ganesa, and submit the ardent struggles of my soul to the decrees of friendship. The request of Maandaara I am unable to resist, even when his arguments are too feeble to make any impression on my mind: though my reason is unconvinced, I am subdued by my tenderness; and should consider myself unworthy of the name of friend, could I persist in tearing myself from my country at the moment that Maandaara is about to be restored to its bosom. Yes, my friend! I have this moment received the delightful intelligence that the Firman, which restores thee to thy

Zimeendary, hath been issued! Thou mayest return in peace to the land of thy fathers! The Gods of Baandaresa shall be raised from their hiding places in the earth, to be placed upon the altars of his son: they shall see him perform the rites of hospitality, spread his feast for the poor, and afford shelter to the oppressed. The Daivers, who delight in beholding the reward of virtue, shall hover round your dwelling. Seraswatee shall bless your hours of study, and the bees of Cama, divested of their stings, shall pay you the tribute of pure and genuine sweetness.

I have prepared Zaamarcanda for receiving you as her husband. Her mind is too gentle to require the harsh restraint of authority: let me, therefore, conjure you to treat her with tenderness; and you will be repaid by that willing obedience, which is the offspring of affection in a docile and ingenuous mind. For my share, I declare to you, that while I accept, with pleasure, of your sister for my wife, I, at the same time,

must inform you of my intention of acting in direct opposition to your advice. From me she shall receive every indulgence. If she has any understanding, I will take pleasure in improving it: nor shall I dread any consequence that can arise from doing so. The more I meditate, the more am I convinced, that to tread firmly in the path of virtue, it is necessary that we should be supported by the staff of knowledge. Ignorance is the mother of many follies.

It is with grief that I behold a mind, great and noble as that of my friend, darkened by the clouds of prejudice. Had you, with me, paid homage to Seraswatee, the soul-enlightening Goddess would have inspired you with ideas more worthy of yourself: you would not then have attributed a desire to enlarge the sphere of knowledge, and an ardent admiration of excellence, wherever found, to the influence of magical spells or incantations.

There is a period, beyond which, if the human mind remains bound in the chains of

ignorance, it loses the power of expansion, and considers the existence of it in others as the dream of illusive imagination.

He who loosed the fetters of my understanding, who convinced me, by the cultivated state of his own, how high the minds of mortals might soar—the enlightened Percy—taught me to observe, that the negative ignorance in which the mind is immersed, when excluded from commerce with the world, is of a nature far less obdurate than that which has been rivetted by Pride in the bosom of society. Such is the ignorance of Sheermaal. His mind was too much narrowed by its own prejudices to receive a fair impression from new images, The few ideas which had been put into it by his first teacher, had been received without examination, but retained with the pertinacity of unyielding pride.

Can *he* be a proper judge of the peculiar customs of remote nations, who measures every thing by the narrow standard of his own prejudices? Can *he* who, instead of

making observations on the variety of human character, pronounces sentence of condemnation on whatever he does not understand; can *he* be qualified for communicating information to others? No. False and foolish will ever be the conclusions of presumptuous ignorance!

Ah! what a pattern might Sheermaal have found in the travellers and the travel-writers of Europe. How many of these does England alone, every year, pour from her maternal bosom? Happy for Sheermaal, if he had followed the laudable example of these sapient youths; how deep would then have been his observations! how important his discoveries!

I am unwilling to speak with disrespect of a Bramin; I view the ignorance of this man with pity, and should only give to his *prejudice* the smile of contempt, but I cannot perceive his malice and his falsehood without feelings of abhorrence and indignation. Is it for a mind, base and ignoble as his, to

accuse the ingenuous and enlightened Percy of falsehood?

O that Maandaara could have known that incomparable youth! That he could have listened to his instructions, while every word he uttered was like the vivid flash of lightening, illuminating the dark expanse of night. He would then have been convinced, that a mind like his was incapable of swerving from the rigid dictates of truth, and he would have united with me in reprobating every attempt to calumniate his memory. Dear shall his memory be to Zaarmilla, while the blood of life flows through his veins, and whoever would shun my resentment must be careful how they suffer the shadow of disrespect to pass over the name of my departed friend!

I HAVE just received the two concluding letters of that ignorant and deluded Bramin, who has instilled his base prejudices into the

mind of my friend. Surely some malignant Dewtah must have blinded the eyes and fettered the understanding of this unhappy man, who could not, otherwise have been so grossly deceived.—What! during his ten years abode among Christians, never to have heard of, or seen, the Christian Shaster! that Shaster, the most abstruse and difficult doctrines of which are so carefully inculcated into the tender minds of youth, that every boy who is sent to the University is so perfectly master of the subject as to be able to give his solemn assent to the unerring explanations of his Church; that Shaster, of which the precepts of peace, Charity, Humility, and universal Benevolence, form the basis of every law, and direct the practice of every Christian court! That Shaster I have studied with the strictest attention, and do solemnly assure you, that the virtues I have enumerated are as strictly enjoined to the Christians, as the performance of Poojah to the Hindoo, or the Fast of Ramozin to the Mussulman. The Mussul-

man fasts, and the Hindoo performs Poojah, according to their respective laws; and can we believe that the Christian alone treats with contempt the authority of his God?

How could the lie-loving Bramin expect to be credited, when he asserts that Christians enter into the traffick of blood! That these men, who walk by the rule of 'doing to others as they would be done by in the like case,' invade the countries of the defenceless, and seizing, with tiger-like ferocity, their unoffending children, bind them in the galling chains of slavery, and devote them, as a cruel sacrifice, to the black goddess of affliction! Surely such a representation cannot fail to appear in its true light to every one who knows the jealousy entertained by the sublime Governours of that enlightened nation for the purity of their honour! so great, that even those Chiefs whom we have considered as bulwarks raised by the immortal Veeshnû to protect us from the destroyer, have fallen short of the standard of perfection erected in the immaculate bosoms of

their brethren at home! Can such men be supposed to sanction the traffick of human misery? Ah! how little doth he know of the undeviating rectitude of the British Senate!

Indeed, all that he says upon the religious rites practised by the English nation is equally false and absurd. There is no such thing as any Poojah performed to bits of painted paper; neither are partridges held sacred. From examining their Shaster, with the strictest accuracy, I am prepared to assert, that it contains not one word which could countenance such idolatry. And whether it is likely that any practices, not warranted by its authority, would be suffered to become prevalent, I shall leave you to judge; after informing you, that, in England, no man is deemed qualified for holding even the meanest employment in the state, but by the performance of an act of the most solemn devotion; an act which is only safe to the pious and the pure, and of which to participate unworthily is declared to be a heinous

sin! Ah! how pure must be the morals of such a people!

As to what he says of the frivolous education bestowed upon Christian women, it is sufficient to observe, that it is utterly inconsistent with the belief of the immortality and progressive improvement of the human soul; it is, indeed, to absurd to stand in need of confutation. When he can convince me, that the men are vain, voluptuous, selfish, and unjust, then shall I believe, that the women are frivolous and ignorant.

In regard to what he asserts of the different Casts into which the people are divided, I am not so well prepared to answer him. I only know, that nothing like it appears in the Christian Shaster. The *people of family* and the *people of no family* are there put upon a level; and at the time it was written it is evident *the people of style* had never been heard of.

Oh! that it had been permitted me to have confuted the misrepresentations of this wicked Bramin by the unerring answers of *experi-*

once; that I could have followed the impulse of my own desires in the glorious pursuit of wisdom, and traced the obscure and distant path by which Knowledge disseminated her treasures over the various regions of the earth! Ah! didst thou know what it has cost me to relinquish this favourite pursuit; what self-denial I have been obliged to exert, ere I could turn mine eyes from the enchanting prospect that opened to my view, thou wouldst esteem this act of friendship more than if I had poured into thy lap the accumulated treasures of my fathers!

Having once determined, thou needest not fear that ought shall have power to shake my resolution. I swear to thee, by the name of my father, *that while Prymaveda lives, Zaarmilla will never forsake her.*

I shall be at Rampore in the space of a fortnight: there I shall give to the arms of my friend the lovely and gentle Zamarcanda, and receive thy sister for the partner of my bosom. After the performance of our nuptials I shall have the pleasure of conducting

you to the ancient seat of your fore-fathers. You will be received with joy by all the Ryots, and welcomed by every surrounding Zimeendar with the sincerest satisfaction. You must, after this, return with me to Almora; and there, where every scene recals, to memory the days of early felicity, we shall renew the studies and retaste the pleasures of our youth. We shall mingle our tears of gratitude at the tomb of the venerable Pundit, who first poured the balm of instruction into our young and tender minds.

In the fair bosom of creation, and in the gorgeously enamelled vault of heaven, we shall together read those divine mysteries, over which the wisdom of our holy Bramins has thrown a veil that is impenetrable only to ignorance.* From these we will rise to contemplation of that

* This expression seems favourable to the opinion entertained by some of our own writers, that great part of the Mythology of the Hindoos is nothing more than enigmatical representations of astronomical facts.

Omniscient Spirit, whose-all ruling pow'r
Bids from each sense bright emanations beam;
Glows in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream,
Smiles in the bud, and glistens in the flow'r
That crowns each vernal bow'r;
Sighs in the gale, and warbles in the throat
Of every bird that hails the blooming spring,
Or tells his love in many a liquid note,
While envious artists touch the rival string,
Till rocks and forests ring;
Breathes in rich fragrance from the sandal grove,
Or where the precious musk-deer playful rove:
In dulcet juice from clust'ring fruit distils,
And burns salubrious in the tasteful clove:*

May the sovereign Maya† present to the mind of Maandaara an ever varying assem-

* See the sixth stanza of the Hymn to Narayena, as translated by Sir Willliam Jones.

† It will be sufficient here to premise, that the inextricable difficulties attending the vulgar notion of *material substances*, induced many of the wisest Hindoos "to believe, that the whole Creation was rather an *energy* than a *work*, by which the Infinite Being, who is present at all times, in all places, exhibits to the minds of his creatures a *set of perceptions* like a wonderful picture or piece of musick, always varied, yet always uniform: so that all bodies, and

blage of fair ideas! but may that which is dearest to his heart be the friendship of Zaarmilla!

What can I say more!

their qualities, exist, indeed, to every wise and useful purpose: but exist only as far as they are *perceived*. This *Illusive Operation* of the Deity, the Hindoo philosophers call *Maya*, or *Deception*." See the Argument to the above mentioned Hymn.

[In the correspondence of the Rajah we here find a chasm of several years. Though none of the letters bear any date, we have, from circumstances mentioned in the preceding ones, concluded them to have been written toward the begining of the year 1775. Those which follow, we presume, could not have been written before the year 1779 or 1780.]

LETTER VIII.

From the Rajah Zaărmilla, *to* Maăndaăra.

(*Written from Barellee.*)

MAY the powerful Eendra be ever propitious to the most benignant of friends, and the Goddess Sree preserve his heart from the arrows of affliction!

An opportunity offers, of which I am not slow to avail myself, of sending thee information of my health and safety. Had not sorrow spread its raven wing over the beauties of every prospect, my journey might have been delightful. But, alas! to him whose heart is oppressed by recent calamity, the face of nature is veiled in darkness. My person was soon at a distance from the scene of sorrow, but from it I could not, by distance, disengage my mind. Prymaveda!

my affectionate and faithful Prymaveda, expiring in my arms, was the picture that every where presented itself to my eyes. Her last low and and feeble sighs were still the only sounds which vibrated upon my ears. Change of scene afforded no alleviation to my grief, and Time, whose tongue of fire devoureth all things, appeareth to move with too slow a pace to leave me room to hope much from his assistance. One only source of consolation presented itself to my deeply wounded mind, it was the reflection of having contributed to the happiness of her whose image dwells in my heart. Had I ever reproved with harshness, or indulged my pride in the morose exercise of authority, how insupportable would be the bitterness of my affliction?

Let not Maandaara reproach his friend for indulging in these melancholy reflections. The woman who is attached to her husband will follow the spirit of her departed Lord, even though condemned to the regions of punishment; and shall my soul forget her

who waiteth for me in the realms of death? She, from whom sprung my final deliverer!* She, who was the companion of my days, the friend of my heart, whose gentle manners and prudent counsels smoothed the rugged path of life and gave value to every blessing. But, alas! the innocent vivacity, the endearing tenderness, which, but yesterday, were the delight of my life, are now recalled but to aggravate my sorrow. But why should I with the dart that rankles in my own bosom wound the breast of my friend? Let me try to change the subject.

* Alluding to the ceremony of the Sradh, which the Hindoos believe it necessary should be performed by a man's own son, in order to facilitate his entrance to the regions of felicity; it is therefore, by them esteemed a great misfortune to die childless. In the drama of Sacontala, Dushmanta thus laments his fate, 'Ah me! the departed souls of my ancestors, who claim a share in the funeral cake which I have no son to offer, are apprehensive of losing their due honour.—My forefathers must drink, instead of a pure libation, this flood of tears, the only offering which a man who dies childless can make.' See Sac. Page 125.

At Bissoolee, I was received by my kinsman with every mark of kindness. He endeavoured to divert my mind from the subject of its own griefs, by turning my attention to those great transactions of which this country had lately been the scene.

The first information that is given us upon any subject, that is in its nature interesting, and which is beyond the reach of our own inspection, is so greedly received, that the judgment we form upon it is equally prompt and decisive. I have frequently observed that such hasty judgment is upon more full investigation found erroneous; and here I had ample proof of the justice of the observation.

When the fall of the Afghan Cawns had taken place, we rejoiced to hear that this beautiful and fertile province was to be put under the administration of Bêâss Râye,* that pious Hindoo who had shed so many tears over the misfortunes of his country.

* See the Rohilla History.

We imagined that he who could paint the extortions and oppressions of the Afghans in such true and lively colours, must necessarily be possessed of a good and feeling heart. Alas! the art of describing human misery and the virtue of feeling for it are two very different things.

This man, who declaimed so eloquently against the rapacity of the Afghans, had a heart *so steeled* by avarice as to be impervious to every sentiment of humanity. The country groaned beneath his oppressions, and his removal was considered as a deliverance from the pestilence.

After having spent a week at Bissoolee, I took leave of my kind but too officious kinsman, and proceeded to Barellee. The approach to this city, through lofty rows of bamboos, which form a continued arbour, surrounded on every side by gardens flourishing in all the pride of beauty, extorted my admiration.

I did not fail to visit the tomb of the renowned Afghan, who was so long the terrour,

and the glory of Kuttaher.* I chose to visit it alone. There are moments when the soul, absorbed in its own reflections, feels an elevation which is incompatible with any society.

The sun had just hidden the splendour of his beams behind the hills of Bissoolee, and night begun to spread her dusky curtain over the face of nature, when I approached the silent scene where the tomb of the warriour was reared. Of that ambition, before the impetuous career of which the bars of gratitude and

* Hafiz Rhamut, a Rohilla chief, celebrated for his warlike talents and unprincipled ambition; by betraying the trust of his friend, and usurping the inheritance of his wards, he put himself at the head of the Rohilla government; and was killed at the battle of Cutterah, 22d of April 1774. By those who ought to have known better Hafiz Rhamut has been confound with *Hafiz*, the celebrated poet of Shiraz, who flourished above four hundred years ago. On consulting the Parliamentary Register, we find Hafiz Rhamut, who was neither a poet nor a man of letters, introduced as '*famous throughout the East, for the elegance of his literature and the spirit of his poetical compositions.*' Parliamentary Register, No. 76, Page 205.

of justice had been annihilated; that ambition, insatiable as the ocean and extensive as the firmament of heaven, what were now the limits? Small was the spot which contained the mouldering remains of him who had struck the Princes of the earth with terrour. I listened—but the thunder of his voice was no longer to be heard. I looked—but the crowds of flatterers, who were wont to pay adulatory homage to his smiles, were no longer to be seen. The world, which had beheld the Afghan greatness arise like a meteor from the womb of obscurity, which had been dazzled by the brightness of its splendour and astonished by the celerity of its progress, beheld, without regret, its utter extinction in this narrow tomb. I indulged in these reveries the greater part of the night. The remainder of my time at Barrellee was spent in making inquiries concerning the remarkable events which have taken place in its vicinity. The difficulty of obtaining information was greater than I was aware of. Every one whom I applied to for that purpose, I found to be so brimful of that part of the

story which particularly related to himself, that I was obliged to listen to a volume of uninteresting anecdotes before I could arrive at the truth.

The ravages committed by the troops of his Highness, after the battle of Cutterah,* were such as have been constantly practised by every victorious army; but the contrast exhibited in the behaviour of the English was altogether new and uncommon, such as no Mussulman army has ever been known to practise; and such as, I greatly fear, they will never be induced to imitate.

After having, by their courage and superiour skill, decided the event of the day, while those for whom they fought rushed upon the spoil of the defeated enemy, and, in their avidity for plunder, were alike regardless of the remonstrances of justice and the dictates of humanity, the gallant army of the English, satisfied with the glory of victory, disdained all other spoil. They beheld, with indig-

* See Rohilla History.

nation and horrour, the behaviour of their allies, and exerted themselves for the protection and relief of the unhappy sufferers, whom the successful foe had left destitute of every other resource.

All that I have heard in this place rekindles in my bosom the desire so long cherished, and so unwillingly suppressed, of becoming more intimately acquainted with a people who had ever been the objects of my affectionate veneration. My resolution is taken; and, in pursuance of it, as soon as I have performed the act of pious ablution in the sacred spot where the two wandering blessings of Hindostan unite their waves, I shall proceed to the English camp. In listening to the instructive conversation of these enlightened men, the selfish sorrows which at present occupy my heart may, for a time, be soothed into forgetfulness. I shall, perhaps, renew my acquaintance with the friends of Percy. I shall, with them, have the pleasure of recapitulating the virtues of that amiable youth: those virtues whose fra-

grance perfumed my soul, and left an impression, strong as the incense from the aromatick plant, which time has not the power to obliterate.

Present Zamarcanda with the affectionate remembrances of her brother. I would recommend my son to her affection, did I not know that her goodness will anticipate my wishes. To you, my friend, and to her, I trust the precious deposit—the life of my life! And to Camdhaynû my soul is expanded in prayers for your happiness!

LETTER XI.

The SAME, *to the* SAME.

FROM the King of worshipped places,* the renowned Allahabad, to the most faithful of

* The English reader will find some light thrown upon the subject of this letter, by consulting Mr. Maurice's Indian Antiquities, who, having traced the progress of the Ganges from the Mountains of Thibet to the plains of Hindostan, thus proceeds: 'Then flowing on through delightful plains, and diffusing riches and verdure in its progress at Allahabad, it receives a rich tribute to its stream in the waters of the Jumna. If we may believe the Bramins, another sacred river, called the Serraswatty, joins these rivers under ground; and, therefore, this spot, consecrated by the threefold junction of their waves, has ever been the resort of devout pilgrims from every province of Hindostan, and is denominated in the Ayeen Ackbery—*The King of worshipped places.*' Maurice's Indian Antiquities, vol. i, page 155.

friends, Zaarmilla sends health and prosperity. While the divine influence of the sacred stream into which I have so lately plunged, continues to refresh my soul, I hasten to impart to thee the sentiments which have inspired my heart. But how shall I describe to you the transport with which I beheld the sacred spot, celebrated through all ages! that spot, consecrated by the threefold junction of the sacred Ganges, the health-giving Jumna, and the unseen, but not less benignant, Serraswattee! I contemplated, with elevated rapture, the junction of those honoured streams, which, here mingling their sacred waves, diffuse the exhaustless treasures of fertility and verdure over the most favoured of regions. From these blessed emblems of the mystick union of the divinities, my soul, wrapt in gratitude, ascended to the Almighty Creating Power, the grandeur of whose works is only to be equalled by his beneficence.

In the lessons of the venerable Pundit, who was our first instructor, and in the sub-

lime writings of the great luminaries of the world, we have been taught to lift our hearts to Him, who alone is infinite in power and goodness! But, alas! the minds of all the Bramins I have met with here, are completely engrossed by the multiplied symbols of his attributes. From their company I have received no pleasure, from their conversation I have reaped no instruction. I shall, therefore, hasten the period of my departure, and, probably, finish this letter from Benares.

From the Queen of science, the favoured seat of learning, the celebrated Benares, Zaarmilla again addresses his friend.

Before I say any thing of a place of which you have already heard so much, I shall proceed to inform you of my visit to the English officers, in the garrison of Chunar

As I stopt to take some refreshment, at the distance of a few coss from the fort, I was informed, by my people, that some English officers, who had been out on a hunting party, were, at that very time, in the same village. I sent to inform them of my intention of visiting Chunar; and, in a few minutes, I was no less delighted, than surprised, to see Doctor Denbeigh enter the veranda, where I was then reposing myself. He saluted me with that glow of kindness which is excited in the bosoms of the benevolent, by an unexpected interview with those whom the hand of time seemed to have separated for ever. He introduced me to his companions, the urbanity of whose manners formed a striking contrast to the plainness of their dress.

On my arrival at Chunar, I found myself as if I had been all at once transported into a new world. Surrounded by the English Chiefs, whose dress, whose language, and whose manners, were all so different from what I had ever been accustomed to, I

could scarcely persuade myself that I did not wander in the realms of delusion.

At first, all Englishmen appeared to me to wear the same aspect and to have the same manners. But when wonder had sufficiently subsided to admit of the calm accuracy of observation, I perceived that every countenance had a characteristick distinction, a distinction which extended to the tones of the voice and gestures of the body. This variety, like the Rágínís which preside over musick,* served but to render harmony more pleasing. The senior Officers smiled at the playful vivacity of their youthful friends, who frequently ventured to exert their wit in a manner that could not have failed to excite resentment in less amiable minds. The time of each was spent according to his own taste. By some it was employed in the pursuit of literature;

* The Rágínís, or female passions, are the Nymphs, which, according to the beautiful Allegory of the Hindoos, preside over musical sounds. A translation of some of the many Dissertations upon this subject which are to be found in the Shanscrit language, is much to be wished for.

and I am certain it must exalt my new friends in the estimation of Maandaara, when he is informed, that to the knowledge of the Persian, many of the English Chiefs add a considerable degree of information in the Shanscrit language. The time of vacation from immediate service, wasted by the Mussulman Commanders in voluptuous indolence, is spent by these more enlightened men in studies which add to their stock of knowledge and do honour to the genius of their country. It is by these strangers that the annals of Hindostan, which her barbarian conquerors have sought to obliterate in the blood of her children, shall be restored! Already have Temples, Palaces and Cities, which Calli* had covered with the mantle of oblivion, been, by the indefatigable researches of these favourites of Serraswattee, dragged to light.

The Pagodas, whose lofty summits had ustained the clouds, and palaces, which

* Calli here signifies Time.

had once spread their golden fronts to the sun, proud of being the residence of the ancient Rajahs of our nation, now bow their time-worn heads to listen to the voice of strangers, and behold the sacred characters, inscribed upon their bosoms, familiarly perused by a people, whose nation had not sprung into existence at the time these towering monuments of Eastern splendour had commenced the progress of decay!

I found great difficulty in tearing myself from the society of these gentlemen, from whom I experienced every mark of kindness and attention: the pain of parting was, however, in some degree alleviated by the promise made to me, by two of these Saibs, to rejoin me at Benares.

I embarked, for the first time, on the mighty Ganges, and, turning my eyes to take leave of the seat of hospitality, I was struck with the appearance of the citadel, which seems to have arisen from the bed of Ganga; the piety of our fathers is still legible on the walls of this massy pile; nor has

the guardian Dewtah forsaken her sacred charge. The seat of her residence remains entire. And though the refreshing breeze of morn wafts her to the seat of Science, she fails not to return to Chunar before the sultry heats of noon.*

We gently floated down the unruffled bosom of the Queen of Rivers, which expands itself on approaching Benares, and puts on an additional air of grandeur, in honour, it would seem, of this celebrated city. The city appears to have returned the compliment, and to have selected its choicest ornaments to deck the banks of its beneficent visitor. Numerous and beautiful are the Pagodas, all enriched by the piety and adorned by the ingenuity of our

* The Fort of Chunar is said to be of the highest antiquity. In the citadel is a black marble slab, on which the tutelary Deity of the place is traditionally supposed, at all times, to be seated; except from sunrise until nine o'clock in the morning, when he is supposed to be at Benares: during which time, from the superstition of the Hindoos, attacks may be made upon the fort with a prospect of success. See Hodges' Travels in India, page 56.

ancestors, which see themselves reflected in the mighty stream. Some, in mouldering ruins, tell of the injuries they have sustained, not only from the insidious hand of Time, but from the ruthless bigotry of the destroying foe. Innumerable Ghauts,* some of which are highly decorated, and embankments, which exhibit all the splendour and elegance of architecture, give additional grace and beauty to this most enchanting scene.

My reception from the Rajah was extremely flattering. You will, no doubt, be anxious for my opinion of this man, who now fills so exalted a station.

There is no trial so dangerous to virtue as prosperity; had the father of this young man continued to occupy the office of Dewan to the Aumeldar† of the province, so long

* Flights of steps leading up from the river.

† Bulwart Sing, the father of Cheyt Sing, was the son of Monserans, a Bramin, who had been appointed *steward* to Rushem Ally, then *governour* of the province of Benares; he supplanted his master, and obtained the pro-

filled by his grandfather, and he himself succeeded to the same advantageous, though subordinate employment, he might, perhaps, have conducted himself with temper and discretion: but the height of his elevation has made him giddy; he wishes to quit the staff which has hitherto supported him, and by the assistance of which he has climbed to his present greatness. If he succeeds, he will probably be made sensible of his folly by the precipitancy of his fall.

You may imagine in what manner this young man is imposed upon by his people, when I tell you, that they have actually made him believe that the present Governour General is not without enemies, even in the Supreme Council! Was ever any thing more absurd, than to imagine that men, who could possibly have no other motive for visiting these regions than to promote their country's glory and the happiness

vince for himself: and this was the origin of a man, called, by some in this country, a sovereign Prince! See Broomes' Elucidation of the Articles of Impeachment.

of mankind, should yet become enemies to him who has so eminently contributed to both? Ridiculous idea! What is it but to imagine, that from the base motives of *personal enmity, envy of superiour talents*, or *jealousy of superiour power*, these men would prefer the ruin of a rival, to the glory and preservation of an empire! How unworthy of the character of Englishmen!

I was much rejoiced at the arrival of my two English friends, whose chief motive for visiting Benares at this time was to inspect and examine the astronomical apparatus still extant in the Tower of the Stars. Both these gentlemen were deeply learned in this divine science. The stupendous engines, constructed by the ingenuity of our ancestors, for measuring the expanse of heaven, and tracing through its trackless arch the path of its illustrious inhabitants, filled their minds with astonishment. Alas! that these evidences of the wisdom of our fathers should now serve to mark the degeneracy of their children! That science,

which exalts the soul to heaven, which enables it to peruse that book of wisdom where the Supreme hath written his attributes in the most legible characters, even in the golden orbs, whose distant glories delight the eye of ignorance—that science, so familiar to our fathers, is now almost lost to their unenlightened sons. But as the splendid luminary of the sky, when apparently extinguished in darkness, continues still to pursue his course, illuminating with his brightness the various inhabitants of the earth; so doth the Goddess of Science pursue her radiant journey: and when we vainly imagine she is gone for ever, if we open the eyes of our understanding, we shall see her beaming with redoubled lustre on the children of another hemisphere. These strangers could, at one glance, comprehend the use of those instruments, which the Pundits, who attended us, could not explain; and I soon found that the knowledge imparted to us upon this subject, by our reverend teacher, was but ignorance, compared to

their superiour attainments. Need we farther proof that the spirit of Brahma is not confined to any particular region, but extendeth over his great creation ?

In the conviction of this truth, I have determined to devote some months to the cultivation of a more intimate acquaintance with those who are so well qualified to impart the light of knowledge to my mind.

I have now fulfilled the purpose of my journey to Benares, but have no pleasure in the thoughts of returning to Almora. Alas ! wherefore should I return ? The lamp of love is extinguished in my dwelling, and darkness rests upon my pleasant bowers. To my friend, and to my sister, I can, with confidence, entrust the only treasure that interests my heart. Yes, Zamarcanda, I know that thou wilt watch with a mother's care over the helpless infancy of my child. May the Gods of our nation reward thy tenderness !

What can I say more ?

LETTER X.

From the SAME, *to the* SAME.

WHOSE happiness, saith the wise instructor, 'is equal to that of the man who hath a friend to live with, a friend to converse with, and a friend to embrace?' and such happiness it is now my destiny to enjoy. Behold me at Calcutta, under the same roof with the gentle Saib, who was the choice friend of the ever-lamented Percy!

Once more embarking on the bosom of the beneficent Ganga, I was conducted by the gentle Goddess to Patna, where the first person that met my arrival was no other than Captain Grey himself. He instantly recognised me, and received me with the spontaneous glow of cordial affection. The

few days that I remained there, were chiefly occupied in viewing that ancient city, which the residence of the English has recalled to the vigour of life. Nothing has more forcibly struck my mind, in the whole course of my journey, than the amazing contrast, in point of fertility and cultivation, between the territories of the Christian and Mussulman Lords of Hindostan. In the Mussulman districts, we behold ruined villages, where, instead of the cheerful noise of the mechanick or the mingled hum of light-hearted loquacity, universal silence reigns; nor, in some once populous districts, does any human figure meet the eye, save that of some solitary Bramin, who, absorbed in contemplation, forsakes the haunts of men.

The chief stations of the English, on the contrary, may easily be traced by the flourishing state of the country which surrounds them: there the peasant throws the grain into the liberal bosom of the earth with cheerfulness, assured that he shall reap the reward of his toil. Having paid his rent,

he knows that the remainder will be his own; nor fears that it will be wrested from him by the open violence of the spoiler, or seized by the hard hand of rapacious avarice. Even when the heavens withheld their fructifying distillations from the thirsty earth, and ghastly famine stalked through the provinces around, the benignant charity of the English Chiefs sustained the lives of thousands: and thousands more would have been saved from perishing, had their religious principles permitted them to accept the proffered bounty.*

The day after my arrival at Patna, Captain Grey received the agreeable news of his having been promoted, by the Governour general, to a new appointment, which demanded his immediate attendance at Calcutta. It was with pleasure that I accepted

* The English reader may, perhaps, object to the account of the Rajah, as being very different from that tale of horrors which has been so generally received. Which account comes nearest to the truth, those who have been eye witnesses of the scene described can best determine.

his obliging invitation to accompany him thither. Several of his friends agreed to be of the party. We proceeded in Budgerows, furnished with every accommodation that could add pleasure to this delightful voyage.

As the channel of the river enlarged, my heart bounded within me at the expanse of waters which surrounded me. 'Yet what is this stream, in all its majesty,' exclaimed I, 'in comparison of that mighty ocean! that fathomless abyss! which all these Europeans have already passed.' Such is the degree of knowledge to be acquired in retirement, compared to the attainments of those whose bosoms receive the waters of wisdom flowing through the thousand channels of experience!

The novelty of the picturesque and beautiful scenery that frequently presented itself to our eyes, produced astonishment and delight; but the uncommon traits of character which I observed in some of my companions, exhibited a novelty still more interesting.

As an example, I shall only attempt to describe to you a few of those features in the character of one young Officer, from which you may form some idea of the many subjects of wonder with which a stranger is surrounded when he enters into the society of Christians.

The first thing that attracted my attention toward this young man, was the beauty of his countenance; but the prepossession was soon done away by the familiarity of his manners, and that indecorous want of respect toward his superiours, which gave me inconceivable disgust. When the senior Chiefs opened their lips to speak, instead of listening in mute attention to the words of wisdom which proceeded from their mouths, he interrupted their discourse with some sally of wit, which not unfrequently presented all they had said in so ridiculous a point of view as to excite the laughter of all present. Judge how this shocked and offended me! Not a day passed in which he did not perform some wild pranks; in these,

however, there was such a mixture of pleasantry as to force mirth to get the better of anger. On expressing to Captain Grey my surprise at the lenity with which this young man was treated, even by those who suffered from him, he gave me to understand that the follies of which I complained, were occasioned by a disease, called, in their language, HIGH SPIRITS; a malady peculiar to the climates of Europe. This information quickly changed my aversion for the poor youth into compassion; but, surely, if this disease be very common in those climates, it must be extremely troublesome: how happy is it, that it is not infectious? I was very sorry to learn that he intended being of our party to Calcutta, and avoided, as much as possible, having any communication with him; but my efforts were vain: his disorder made him so restless, that he never remained in one part of the Budgerow for ten minutes at one time.

It would be endless to repeat all the fooleries of this youth during our voyage;

I shall only mention the following, which will be sufficient to give you an idea of the effects of *high spirits*.

It was on an evening of unparalleled beauty. The air, which had just been refreshed by a North-wester,* breathed sweet fragrance; delightful as the reconciliation of friends, when the clouds of resentment have been dissipated by the Sun of Truth. The clear blue sky saw itself reflected on the unruffled bosom of the Queen of Rivers. On the right hand, the lovely Goddess stretched her majestick waves to such a distance, that the prominent and lofty banks, which formed her western girdle, appeared to our view as a black line touching the horizon. At less than half a coss distance on the left, a richly cultivated country smiled upon us, through the various openings of a Mango grove, which frequently intruded upon the verdant slope, to kiss the tresses of Ganga.

* A term used in India for a particular species of hurricane.

We were tempted by the beauty of the evening to go on shore somewhat sooner than usual: on our landing, innumerable flocks of peacocks, lorys, and other inhabitants of the grove, were in motion, who, waving their resplendent plumage in the golden rays of the declining sun, gave an additional charm to the graces of this lovely landscape.*

* A late writer (Mr. Belsham, in his Reign of George the Third) in portraying the horrid deeds of our countrymen in India, and the calamitous state to which that country was reduced, through their oppressions, thus expresses himself: 'Striking, indeed, is the contrast between the situation of the country at this period, and that which we were told it enjoyed, *in the happy times of the Mogul Government.* The kingdom of Bengal, during a long period of peaceful repose, is described as (*then*) exhibiting the most charming and picturesque scenery, opening into extensive glades, covered with a fine turf, and interspersed with woods, *filled with a variety of birds of beautiful colours; among others, peacocks in abundance,* sitting on the vast horizontal branches, displayed their dazzling plumes to the sun.' &c.

The benevolent reader will be happy to learn from the account of the Rajah, confirmed by the views of a late ingenious traveller (Mr. Hodges) that the race of peacocks

A walk to the next village was proposed, and agreed to by all the party, excepting one little fat man, who seemed upon all occasions, to make the study of his own ease the principal object of his concern, and whose extreme selfishness had given frequent disgust to all his fellow voyagers.

has not been *utterly exterminated* by the cruel rapacity of the British Governours of Bengal! If the misrepresentations of credulity had been always restrained to external objects, their confutation would have been an easy task. But who can follow the historian, who pretends to expose the secret workings of the human mind, and pursues the victim of his prejudice even to the throne of God! Who, speaking of the unfortunate death of a man, whose services had been an acknowledged benefit to his country, could presume to say, that 'though acquitted at the highest human tribunal, he could not acquit himself, *or hope for acquittal at that far more awful tribunal at which he dreaded to appear!*' History of the Reign of George the Third, vol. i, page 355.

Instead of the quotation from Persius, we would rather conclude such a sentence with the lines of Pope.

Let not this weak unknowing hand,
Presume thy bolts to throw,
Or deal damnation o'er the land
On each I judge thy foe.

To him young Cooper attached himself, declaring that he could not think of leaving alone, in a strange country, so valuable a gentleman. Pleased at this instance of his benevolence, we commended his good-nature, and proceeded on our walk.

Following the course of the transparent Nullah,* on whose banks we had landed, we soon arrived at a small village, most of whose peaceful inhabitants we found busied at their looms, beneath the friendly shade of a far spreading banyan. In one of the hundred arbours formed by the descending branches, sat a musician, who softly touched the chords of a veena: to the sweet sound of which the women and children were listening with mute attention.

Our approach presented a new object to their curiosity. The musick had ceased, but was renewed at the request of Captain Grey who entreated we might give no interruption either to their labours or amusement.

* Small streams.

Mean time the Chief of the village drew near, to perform the duties of hospitality. A young officer, who saw him advancing, hastily inquired, in English, whether we could be supplied with milk from the village? 'Archa Sahib, tamorrow Mulluk,'* replied the villager, making a profound reverence. 'To-morrow wont do for us, friend,' replied the Officer, 'we can't stay here all night.' And returning to Captain Grey, 'we have had a fruitless errand,' said he, 'for the old man here, says, we can have no milk till to-morrow.'

The poor fellow, who had been greatly mortified by the abrupt manner in which the gentleman had received his offered civilities, now repeated them to Captain Grey in the same terms, who laughed very heartily at his friend for suffering the casual resemblance between the sound of an English and a Bengal word to lead him into such a mistake.

* Is not this your country?—command in it what you please!

Having received from the village an ample supply of the articles we wanted, we returned in search of our friends, followed by a train of villagers, loaded with milk, eggs, fruit, &c.

We soon reached the Mango grove; but what was our surprise, on entering it, to see the poor fat gentleman straining his unwieldy limbs to grasp the trunk of a large tree, which he was attempting to climb as fast as his untoward bulk would permit. Panting for breath, he cast a look of despair on young Cooper, who sat perching on a bough of the same tree above; and whose voice we heard from a considerable distance, vehemently urging his corpulent companion to proceed: 'but two or three feet farther, my dear sir, and you will be out of all danger,' cried he. The poor gentleman made an effort, but slipped back to the same situation. 'One other attempt, for heaven's sake, my dear sir,' resumed Cooper, 'or the tyger will lay hold of your poor limbs.' 'Gracious heaven!' cried the gentleman, in

agony. At these words, he cast a glance around, which was fully descriptive of the horrours of his situation. On perceiving us, he shouted out, that Cooper had seen a tyger: beseeching us, at the same time, to assist him, and to take care of ourselves. Captain Grey, who immediately apprehended some trick of young Cooper, inquired of the villagers, whether any tyger had been lately seen in the neighbourhood? and, being answered in the negative, he prevailed on the poor gentleman to descend. On further investigation, it appeared that the young gentleman had been seized with a paroxysm of his disease in our absence, and that the story of the tyger had been invented by him, in order to throw his poor unsuspecting companion into the awkward situation in which we found him; and of which he produced, next morning, so admirable a drawing, as excited a laughter in all who saw it: from me, I confess, it extorted an unwilling smile. But these Europeans do not seem to think the enter-

tainment that is purchased at the expense of the feelings of another is too dearly paid for.

We arrived at Calcutta in the night, and went directly to the house of a friend of Captain Grey's, where, according to the rules of hospitality established in this place, we were both invited to take up our abode.

The Governour General is now in the country, and as it is not proper that I should appear till after I have been introduced to him, I shall have nothing of any consequence to write for some days.

It has always been my intention to communicate to you a faithful copy of the first impression made upon my mind by every new object presented to it; but knowing the aptitude of ignorance to fall into the path of error, I am not without apprehensions, that, while I intend to inform, I may possibly

mislead. This shall not, however, deter me from pursuing my plan, but only render me more careful in forming my judgment.

Experience has already taught me, that the conclusions which are formed with precipitance, are almost always retracted with shame: thus, for instance, when I hear these Christians introducing, in familiar conversation, the name of their *Almighty Creator* upon the most trifling occasions, nay, sometimes, as it would appear, merely to supply the lack of matter and to fill the chasms of conversation, I can scarcely forbear from accusing them of impiety. But a moment's reflection convinces me of the absurdity of supposing that they, who boast the light and privileges of a divine revelation, can be guilty of irreverence to the Supreme! I therefore conclude, that when these Christians pronounce, with so much ease, *that Name*, which is held by every pious Hindoo in too great reverence to be uttered except upon the gravest and most solemn occasions, and which no faithful Mussulman was ever

known to pronounce, without a pause, it is from a consciousness of their own superiour piety, which they, doubtless, imagine entitles them to this degree of familiarity with their Maker.

Another instance of the same kind has occurred to me, in an expression much in use, the meaning of which, on applying to the Dictionary, I found to be that of *the eternal punishment of the soul in hell!* I shuddered to think how often I had heard this dreadful doom pronounced by some of my fellow-travellers, not only on their own souls, but on that of many of their brethren! but on more maturely considering the matter, I found it more agreeable to the precepts of their religion, as well as to the dictates of common sense, to conclude, that in my imperfect knowledge of the language, the *negative* had escaped me: and thus, what sounded in my ears as the most dreadful imprecation, was, in reality, an ejaculation uttered in the spirit of that charity, which teaches to pray for their enemies even in the moment of wrath.

Looking upon it in this *proper* light, I could not but admire the fervour with which I last night heard many petitions of this kind preferred for the soul of a General Officer, who had introduced certain regulations into the service by which these gentlemen considered themselves aggrieved. And I make no doubt, that had the ejaculations of these young men been reported to him, he would have had the charity to pray for them with similar fervency!

'A GREAT man,' saith he whose words are incomparable in wisdom, 'should speak kindly, without meanness; he should be valiant, without boasting; he should be generous, shedding his bounty into the dish of the worthy; he should be resolute, but not rash.' This is the character of a great man!* And such an one have I this day seen.

* See Hetopades.

It would be vain to attempt describing to you my feelings, while I stood in the presence of this truly exalted personage. Of him, who uniting the lofty spirit of the renowned Acbar,* with the penetrating and comprehensive genius of his still more renowned minister, has shewn himself superiour to both in schemes of sound and extensive policy, as well as in that pure and blessed spirit of humanity which has distinguished every act of his administration.

The pious Hindoo, no longer forced to submit to laws that are repugnant to the spirit of his faith, no longer judged by the unhallowed ordinances of strangers, beholds with extatick gratitude, the holy Shaster† rising, at the command of this enlightened

* The Emperor Acbar was the cotemporary of our Queen Elizabeth, and is one of the few monarchs on whose character posterity can dwell with feelings of respect and admiration. The choice of such a minister as the great Abual Fazel, is a sufficient proof of his penetration. Kindred souls naturally discover each other.

† Code of Gentoo Laws, translated by Mr. Halhed.

Governour, to be once more the standard of his obedience.

The same benevolence which has restored to our nation the invaluable privilege of being tried by our own laws, has projected the extension of the same favour to the Mahomedan inhabitants of Hindostan. A translation of the Hedaya,* both into the Persian and English languages, I am well assured, is about to take place, and thus the haughty Mussulman will receive, from Christian magnanimity, a degree of favour and protection, which the laws of his Prophet never taught him to bestow! Surely, one such act is worth a thousand of those deeds of heroes, whose fame is written in letters of blood upon the fields of desolation! just as it is said, that 'truth being weighed against a thousand *Ashmavedajugs*, was found to be of more consequence than the thousand offerings.'

* Commentary on the Mussulman Laws, translated by Mr. Hamilton.

At the house of the Governour General, I was introduced, by Captain Grey, to several gentlemen, both in the civil and military departments. They were all extremely kind and obliging to me, and appeared to be no strangers to those laws of hospitality of which our nation has long considered itself as the exclusive possessor.

I was invited by the Governour General himself, to a notch, or, as they express it, *a ball*, which was to be given in the evening, in a house appropriated to that purpose. On inquiry, I found that the dancers were to be all *English;* a circumstance that delighted me, as I have hitherto had no opportunity of seeing any of their females.

I waited with impatience for the hour which was to take us to the place appointed: but as neither Captain Grey, nor any of his friends, had the same degree of curiosity, the greater part of the company were assembled before we reached the room. When we entered it, amazement and delight

took possession of my soul. It is impossible to convey to you, by words, any idea of the beautiful objects that surrounded me: but you may judge of the transcendant power of their charms, when I tell you, that they shone forth with invincible lustre, in spite of the deformity of a dress, which appears to have been invented by envy with an intention of disfiguring the fairest works of nature. These lovely creatures, to the number of about one hundred, were seated on benches in the European fashion, and smiled and talked to the gentlemen who addressed them, with great spirit and vivacity: but this I did not wonder at; as I had been told by Grey, that they all either *were* or *had been Dancers*: and, you know, women of that profession are seldom at a loss for conversation.

The great man having entered, and received the compliments of the company after the manner of his nation, which consists of very little ceremony, the dancing commenced. But judge of my astonish-

ment, when I beheld the dancing girls led out—not by their masters—but—debasing meanness! each by an English Chief! Sincere as my respect for the Governour General certainly is, I could not restrain my indignation at seeing Chiefs, and military Commanders of high rank and authority, thus publickly degrading themselves by dancing for his amusement. How inconsistent, thought I, is the conduct of mortals! These men, who plume themselves upon their notions of liberty and independence, submit, without reluctance, to an indignity, to which the Omrahs of the empire, who, in the days of its greatness, surrounded the royal Musmud and prostrated themselves to salute the dust which was shaken from the feet of royalty, would sooner have died than have submitted! Though, on the part of the English Chiefs, it appeared entirely voluntary, yet I thought I could perceive that many of them felt sufficient repugnance to this degrading business, which they went through with

that sort of heroick apathy and indifference, which you have beheld in a criminal of our nation when about to be hanged. Indeed, I never saw a dance so very little amusing. The gestures of the women were as little graceful as their dress; and had it not been for the extreme beauty of their countenances, I confess I should soon have been tired with looking at them.

A gentleman whom I had seen in the morning, told me, that his wife wished to be introduced to me. The request surprised me; but as I knew the gentleman to be a personage of high rank and character, I prepared to follow him. He conducted me to the opposite side of the room, and led me up to a group of Bibbys, whom I had mistaken for superannuated dancing girls, but whom I now, to my infinite astonishment, discovered to be the wives of men of rank and eminence, whose names according to the custom of their country, they bore. I could not find myself in the presence of these ladies without experiencing a consi-

derable degree of embarrassment; this was by no means the case with them; like other females, they all spoke at once, and seemed endowed with much loquacity. They looked at me with steady countenances, totally void of that modest timidity, which is the most inestimable gem in female beauty. That glare of colouring, which, at first sight, caught my soul in the net of astonishment, lost, by degrees, its power of enchantment. And as the nightingale,* after having viewed, with short-lived rapture, the splendour of the gaudy tulip, returns with fresh delight to the contemplation of his beloved rose; so did my soul, in the midst of this blaze of western beauty, turn to the remembrance of the gentle graces and endearing charms of my beloved Prymaveda! The loveliness of eyes, sparkling in

* This simile, the Rajah seems to have borrowed from the Persian. Of all the poetical fables of the East, none is so frequently alluded to, in the compositions of the Persian writers, as that which supposes the nightingale to be violently enamoured with the rose.

beauty, may attract our admiration; but the bare recollection of those which beamed with the softness of tender affection, is yet more precious to the soul!

Lost in these reflections, I became insensible to the scene around me; and incommoded by the extreme heat of the room, I took the first opportunity of departing. The green horses of Surraya had seen me perform my morning ablutions in the sacred stream, before my friend Grey returned from this nocturnal festival.

I KNOW you would deem it an unpardonable neglect, should I say nothing to you of the city itself; which, under the auspices of him who is the liberal patron of every useful and every elegant art, is already become worthy of being the capitol of an empire.

Calcutta presents to the eye of a stranger, a spectacle, delightful from its novelty and amusing from the variety of its scenes. This city, which so short a time since as the Subahship of Cossim Ally Cawn, consisted of nothing more than a mean fort and a few surrounding huts, now sees rows of magnificent palaces, adorned by all the beauties of architecture, stretching along the banks of this favoured Mouth of the Ganges, to the distance of several miles. The extent and grandeur of the fortress, have never failed to impress the Asiatick beholder with sentiments of awe and admiration; but all the descriptions we have received tended rather to give an idea of its strength than beauty: it is pre-eminent in both: and when the eye surveys even but a part of this grand and massy structure, taking in, at the same glance, a view of the elegant buildings of the town, separated from each other by gardens, rich in vegetable beauty, the silver current of the river, as it is partially seen gliding be-

tween the ships of every colour, shape, and nation, which here wave their various streamers on its bosom; it is impossible for imagination to conceive a sight more charming. Add to this, the variety to be seen in the streets, where you behold a concourse of people, whose dress, complexion, religion, and manners, all differ widely from each other: and whose numbers are so nearly equalled, that it is impossible to say who is the stranger. All appear to be at home. Here the holy Fakeer, with no other dress than a piece of muslin wrapped round his lean and shrivelled limbs, walks with folded arms, ruminating on some passage of the holy Shaster, and striving, by penance and mortification, to facilitate the moment of absorption and unchanging bliss. There the turbaned Mussulman, from the top of an adjoining minaret, adjures the followers of Mahomet to attend the hours of devotion in the holy Mosque; while the stately Armenian, the money changing Jew, and the no less money

loving Englishman, mingle on the beach, too intent on their affairs of traffick to listen to any voice save that which calls to the temple of Lacshmi.*

European chariots, various in their form and elegant in their structure, drawn by horses decked in silver studded harness, glide like meteors along the streets; passing, in their career, the country hackery,† the heavy loaded camel, and even the majestick, but unwieldy elephant, who turning up his great proboscis, wonders at the noise and bustle which surrounds him.

SHALL Ignorance be for ever leading me into errour? And shall experience never be able to defend me against the dangers of misconception and mistake? I this morning ac-

* Goddess of Riches.

† Small covered carts, drawn by bullocks, which are in general use all over India.

companied Captain Grey into the country, in an open vehicle, called a Buggy, drawn by one horse, which he himself drove. It was the first opportunity we had for conversation since the Govenour's notch, and he was anxious to know my opinion of it. 'What do you think of the ladies,' cried he; 'did you not think some of them very beautiful?' I answered, 'that as to beauty, I must confess, I thought the ladies had but a slender share in every respect, *bloom* only excepted, compared to that which adorned the dancing girls; they, indeed, were beautiful!' ''Tis them I mean,' returned he; 'you do not think I could expect you to admire the old painted witches, to whom —— introduced you?' 'I could never have thought of giving the appellation of ladies to dancing girls,' returned I, gravely. 'Dancing girls!' repeated he, bursting into a fit of laughter, 'Why the ladies whom you saw dance, were, many of them, married ladies, of rank and distinction; the lovely Mrs. * * *, and her still more lovely sister, were of

the number.' 'Is it possible,' cried I, 'that men of rank can basely contaminate their honour, by suffering their wives and daughters to stoop to the degrading employment of dancers to the G. G—'. 'why,' returned Grey, almost suffocated with laughter, 'do you imagine they danced to please him?' 'Whom should you all dance to please, but him?' rejoined I, peevishly, a little picqued by the excess of his mirth. 'Forgive me, dear Zaarmilla,' returned my companion; 'I confess nothing could be more natural than your mistake: I certainly ought to have informed you, that dancing is a favourite amusement in Europe; it forms part of the education of both sexes, and to dance gracefully, is an accomplishment on which women are taught to set a very high value: nor is it without reason that it is thus esteemed, for nothing sets off the charms of a fine woman to greater advantage. 'Did you not remark the young lady in the blue and silver?' continued he. 'The elegance of her figure, the gracefulness of all her motions, the animation

that sparkled in her eye, and the sensibility that glowed in her countenance. Never did —' but here a sudden stop was put to the harangue: in the vehemence of his description, my friend had neglected the management of the reins; the wheels of the carriage were intercepted by the stump of a decayed tree, and the horse impatient of the interruption, began to fret, and rear, till the love-pierced charioteer, applying his whip to the unfortunate animal, forced him to make a sudden spring, which at once extricated him from confinement, and broke the carriage to pieces. We were both thrown to a considerable distance, and though neither of us received any material injury, we were sufficiently bruised to make us remember *the lady in the blue and silver* for some days to come.

It is upon those subjects which particularly excite my curiosity, that I find it most

difficult to procure information. Captain Grey, who is always willing to oblige me, when I call upon him for instruction, is naturally of so silent a disposition, that I fear to trouble him by a multiplicity of questions. When, happily, he of his own accord engages in conversation, he appears to possess a mind enriched by the ore of knowledge, adorned by the gem of taste, enlightened by the steady torch of intellect.

The war, in which his nation is at present engaged, is a subject he seems particularly assiduous to avoid: for, alas! my friend, it must be confessed to thee, that these Christians do not always, as I have hitherto supposed, carry arms *only* to redress the wrongs of the injured, to assert the cause of the oppressed, or to defend themselves from the invaders of their country;—they actually make war *upon one another!*

I have, in vain, sought in their Shaster for some precept that might give a sanction to this custom, for some incident, in the life of their great Teacher, that might afford a

precedent for human butchery. But, no. Whether I turn to the life and conversation of the Founder, or to the precepts and example of his first followers, I find but one spirit —the spirit of peace, of love, the meekness of charity, and the magnanimity of forgiveness. How then comes War? that scourge of mankind! nurse of guilt! and parent of desolation! How comes it to be practised by the professors of a religion, which proclaimed 'peace on earth, and good-will toward the children of men?' I confess that this question has greatly puzzled me; and I can solve it in no other way, than by supposing, that the Christian Shaster, presented me by Percy, is *not complete*: and that an additional revelation hath, in after times, been afforded to these Christians: in which supplement to the Gospels, it is ordained, that when a sufficient number of Christian men are united together to form an army, a brigade, or any other military division, and are dressed in a particular colour, blue, or scarlet or a mixture of both, they shall be licensed

to commit murder, at the command, and by authority, of their *religious* superiours (provided they are in the regular receipt of pay for so doing); and that all the slaughter, bloodshed, and devastation, so committed upon their *Christian brethren* (for whose salvation they believe a Saviour to have descended from above, and in whose society they hope to live for ever in the Kingdom of Heaven) shall no longer be termed Murder, but Glory!

'By whom was constructed that jewel of a word, that monosyllable, friend?* Praise to Veeshnû, for the letter I have just received from thee. It was brought by the Dauk from Benares, and its presence refreshes my soul.

Your apprehensions of the inconveniences to which you think I must be subjected, among these Christians, are without founda-

* Heetopades.

tion. It is true, I meet with many things that would greatly shock me, did I not consider, that that variety of manners, as well as of sentiments, which is pleasing to the superiour divinities, ought not to be displeasing to us. I nevertheless cannot be easily reconciled to that custom of devouring the flesh of so many innocent and unoffending animals, whose lives are daily sacrificed in order to procure a short-lived, and inelegant enjoyment to the vitiated palates of these voluptuaries. The injustice done to these animals, is, however, amply revenged, by the qualities of the liquors which it is the custom to swallow at the conclusion of these cruel feasts; and which, when taken in great quantities, seldom fails to pervert the senses, and reduce the reason to a temporary level with the victims of their gluttony.

In regard to the ceremonies of the Christian religion, of which you want to be informed, I am sorry I cannot satisfy your curiosity. Were I unacquainted with the peculiar precepts of their Shaster, I should

be surprised at the little appearance of devotion that is to be observed among them; but knowing that it is expressly commanded them to 'pray in secret,' and not appear unto men to fast, my wonder is changed into admiration at the strictness and punctuality with which they adhere to the precept! The same secrecy is, indeed, enjoined them with regard to their acts of charity, but it must be confessed that, in this particular, they are not quite so scrupulous.

I yesterday accompanied Captain Grey to a hall, called a coffee-house, where it is the custom for gentlemen to meet and converse on business, or politicks. We no sooner entered, than I observed the eyes of my companion to fix upon a young man of about seventeen or eighteen years, who sat in a corner of the room, apparently retiring from observation. Melancholy and dejection were painted on a countenance, which the hand of nature had endowed with manly beauty. The meanness of his attire pro-

claimed him to be no favourite of Lackshmi,* but his air seemed suited to a better garb. Captain Grey took up a printed paper, which lay before him, but his eyes were frequently turned toward the youth, and his mind appeared absorbed in reflection. A person, at length, entered, who addressed the young man by the name of Morton. 'Morton!' repeated Grey, springing toward the youth, his eyes glistening with pleasure and his manly countenance animated by the glow which warmed his bosom, 'Morton,' repeated he, 'was the name of my first friend, my worthy tutor; and every feature tells me that you, sir, must be his son.' 'The Reverend Mr. Morton, of ———, was my father,' returned the young man.' 'Then you are the son of my old friend,' cried Grey, taking the young man by the hand; and you must look on me as a brother: but this is no place,' continued he, 'to have all my questions answered; you must come

* The goddess of Fortune.

home with me, and let me hear every particular respecting the situation of your family, and especially that of your worthy father, who, I hope, is yet alive?' 'Alas! No;' returned Morton: 'it pleased Heaven to take him from us upward of ten months ago.' The tear of filial sensibility, which trembled in the eye of Morton, appeared to be infectious; my friend Grey seemed afraid of it; and taking the young man by the arm, he instantly led him to the house that is now our home.

On our arrival there, he engaged the young man to give him a recital of all that had befallen his family, since the period in which he had been under the tuition of his father. The relation was short and simple.

His father, who it seems was a priest of the order of *Curates* (for so, at my request, he wrote the word) had, in his old age, been assailed by disease, and afflicted by poverty: death, at length, came to his release, and sent him to obtain the reward of virtue in the region of felicity.

The young man, after this event, proposed to visit India; hoping, that in a region, which since the foundation of the world has been pouring out her treasures to enrich the various countries of the earth, he might acquire a competence for the support of his mother and sisters. With the reluctance of a fond parent, struggling between the dictates of prudence and the yearnings of affection, his mother at length yielded to his entreaty. She was the sooner induced to do so, from the consideration of the many affluent relations she had in the capital; all of whom, she fondly hoped, would strain every nerve to promote the interest of her son. To all these affluent relations she wrote in his behalf, requesting from them letters of introduction to some of the great Chiefs in India, and having presented him with these harbingers of future fortune, she suffered him to depart, loaded with maternal blessings. On his arrival at the capital, which they call London, he did not fail to visit those

relations on whom depended his prospects of future felicity.

Some of them having been under peculiar obligations to his father, would, he doubted not, rejoice in this opportunity of discharging their debt of gratitude; but it unfortunately happened, that he never could find any of them at home.

After repeated disappointments, he wrote to each of them, enclosing his mother's letters to them; and after many days of anxious solicitude, he received the answers of those on whom his hopes had been principally placed. They all grieved at not having it in their power to serve him: they could not but be sorry, extremely sorry, that he had set out in the most unlucky moment possible: for one had just procured an appointment for the son of his taylor, and could not again trouble his friends in power with a similar application. Another had lately made it a point never to solicit any thing for any person out of his own family. A third, had given up, some years ago, all correspon-

dence with India; and a fourth, had made a recent vow never to plague his friends with letters of introduction. Mortified and dispirited with these various disappointments, he was on the point of giving up the pursuit, when his landlady, who had formerly lived in his father's parish, informed him, that her daughter's husband had a friend, who was intimately acquainted with a butcher, who had a vote in a borough, of which one of the Directors of that company of Merchants who have become the Sovereigns of so great a part of India was the representative: by this train of interest she hoped to do something for him. The good woman's hopes and honest endeavours were not frustrated. Through the friend of her daughter's husband, she procured for him an introduction to the slayer of cattle, who prevailed with the Director to favour the Curate's son with a letter of introduction to one of the English Chiefs at this place; and, at the same time, gave him an order for his passage in one of the Company's ships.

His sufferings on the voyage were many, but his ardour was invincible Immediately on his arrival at Calcutta, he presented the letter, on which was founded all his future hopes; but, alas! what was his mortification, on being told, by the great man to whom it was addressed, that it was only one of a hundred applications of the same kind, the twentieth part of which it was utterly impossible for him to attend to!

In a land of strangers, without friends and without bread, too modest to solicit, and too proud to bear the harshness of repulse without feeling its indignity, is it to be wondered that he was reduced to despondency?

It was at this period, in the moment of dejection and despair, that he was discovered by the worthy friend of Percy, in whom he has, indeed, found a brother.

This incident seems to have entirely banished that silence and reserve, which I have hitherto considered as natural to the temper of my friend. Roused by the ardour of friendship, he exerted, in its cause, all his

eloquence and activity; and, in two days, procured for the young man an appointment, which will soon enable him to return the obligations he owes to parental tenderness with the substantial proofs of filial affection.

I HAVE for some days laboured under an indisposition, which has kept me from going abroad. The most mortifying circumstance attending my confinement, is the deprivation of the pleasure I promised myself, in accompanying Grey to the houses of some noble Saibs, where numbers of Bibbys were assembled. By the accounts I received from him, on his return from these parties, I could easily perceive that the remembrance of the bruises we received in our fall, had not been able to give him any antipathy to the lady in the *blue and silver*. As often as he was disappointed in his expectations of seeing her at any of those feasts, the disappoint-

ment was visible in his countenance, and he cut short all inquiries, by declaring, that the visit had been *very stupid.* But if the evening was spent in her presence, hilarity smiled in every feature, and joyfulness beamed from his eyelids.

I longed to see a female, capable of making so deep an impression on a mind so solid; and as soon as I was able to go abroad, I accepted, with eagerness, an invitation to the house of a friend, where she, and many other ladies, were expected to spend the evening. Captain Grey had, in his impatience, ordered our Pallenkeens at so early an hour that we were at his friend's house long before any other guest appeared. The ladies, at length, came; and I recognized the features of several whom I had seen at the notch; but methought they appeared more modest, as well as more beautiful, than when I mistook them for dancing girls, so much is our opinion under the dominion of out imagination. I was now eager to listen to their discourse, and delighted in the ex-

pectation of hearing words of wisdom proceeding from the lips of beauty. Wise might be the words they uttered, and truly edifying their conversation; but, unhappily for me, I was too ignorant of the topicks they discussed to receive much benefit.

Two ladies, who had just arrived from England, engrossed the greatest share of the discourse: innumerable questions were put to them, which they answered with great quickness and volubility. In the course of their conversation, frequent mention was made of *publick places;* by which I understand institutions similar to those formerly established at Athens, where the renowned Socrates, Plato, Zeno, &c. initiated their disciples in the mysteries of wisdom and philosophy: whatever are the sciences taught at those modern seminaries of taste and learning, the minds of these ladies seemed to have acquired the most lively relish for them; and the name of Vestris* (who I take

* A celebrated Opera Dancer.

to be one of the principal of their instructors) was never mentioned without the epithet of delightful! charming! divine!

It is not surprising, that to these females, so well instructed, so learned and sedate, should be entrusted the most important concerns of the state. Such an one's having *had an affair* with a certain great man, was frequently mentioned: but so great was the modesty of these ladies, that not one of them ever hinted at having *had an affair* with any great man herself.

While I was employed in listening to this conversation, my friend Grey was too much occupied with the young lady, whose charms had captivated his heart, to pay attention to any other object, In conversing with her, he seemed inspired with unusual eloquence; and I was happy to perceive that the fair maiden appeared not insensible to his attention, but smiled upon him with angel-like sweetness and complacency.

I have already observed to you, that nothing can be more awkward and ungraceful

than the dress of these females! their robes, instead of falling in easy and graceful folds around their limbs, are extended on huge frames, made of bamboo, or some similar material, and give to their figure very much the shape of a Moor Punky.* The only useful ornament they have, is a Choury,† which, instead of being carried in the hands of their attendants, is stuck in the heads of the ladies, where, by the continual motion, it is of great utility in driving off the flies, which are here much more troublesome and offensive than in Kuttaher.

After some time was spent in conversation, many of the company sat down to cards: that which Sheermaal ignorantly pronounced *a species of worship;* being, in reality, no other than an amusement invented by the Europeans, as chess was by our ancestors, for the pastime of the rich and idle.

* A country vessel of a peculiar construction, used for the conveyance of cotton and other bulky articles.

† A bunch of feathers used to drive away the flies.

Judge, then, what degree of credit is due to the representations of that arrogant Bramin, when he asserts, that many of the females of the West make this pastime the chief business of their existence, sacrificing to it the duties they owe to society, as wives, as mothers, as rational and intelligent creatures. Base slanderer! how little doth he know of the ladies of England!

I HAVE omitted no opportunity of procuring from the young friend of Captain Grey, some degree of information respecting the order of the Priesthood, to which his father belonged. These Priests, when spoken of collectively, are called *the Church;* and have the precedence of the Sovereign, as may be inferred from the usual mode of expression, *Church and King.*

From the conversation of Morton and his friend, I am convinced that to preserve the

primitive purity of their religion, is the first object of attention to the English Government. To ascertain the virtues of those who are devoted to the sacred function, they are destined to undergo trials of no common kind. Worldly riches and honours are held out, not as rewards to virtue, but rather as means of proving the degree of pride, venality, hypocrisy, meanness, &c. of the individuals; and as they are carefully withheld from all who have not given unequivocal proofs of some of these qualifications, men of modest virtue and rigid integrity run no risk of being spoiled by the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

By these humble and lowly men, are performed all the most sacred and important duties of their function. These instruct the ignorant, comfort the afflicted, visit the sick. It is the prayers of these, which ascend to the throne of the Eternal; and it is these likewise, who, from their slender store, impart relief to the children of indigence.

Such were the duties performed by the father of Mr. Morton, who, according to Grey, added to the virtues of a Christian Priest the learning of a true philosopher. This excellent man was never molested by the offer of what is called *preferment*, but was permitted to exert his superiour talents and virtues in a state of poverty, equal to that of the first teachers of Christianity.

Thus is the purity of the Priesthood preserved. The least worthy of its members are provided for in this world; and those whose labours have been truly beneficial to mankind, who have diffused knowledge by their writings, inspired the love of virtue by their precepts, and taught the practice of it by their example, are premitted to look for their reward in the world to come!

'In this world,' says the philosopher, 'the wealthy are every one, every where, and at

all times, powerful. Riches being the foundation of preferment, and an introduction to the favour of the Prince.* It is likewise, here, a necessary introduction to the favour of the ladies.

My poor friend Grey returned this morning from the house which is the residence of his charmer, in a state of indescribable agitation. Vexation, displeasure, and disappointment, were written in such legible characters on his countenance, that they could neither be concealed nor mistaken. I soon discovered that his uneasiness had arisen from that sex, whose fickleness and infidelity have been the theme of the satirists of a thousand generations.

We are told by the sages, 'that women have been at all times inconstant, even among the celestials; and that the security for their virtue is neither a precise behaviour, nor a modest countenance, but depends solely

* See Hetopades.

on the want of suitors.'* These are words of gall, flowing from the heart of the disappointed! It was not, however, on the fickleness of the sex that my friend poured forth the invectives of his wrath; it was upon their avarice and ambition.

Had I given credit to his assertions, I should have considered all the young Bibbies of Calcutta as votaries of Lackshmi;† and that, with them, 'no man is handsome, none ugly, none virtuous, valiant, or wise, *but as he is rich.*'

The smiles of the lady in the blue and silver, which gladdened the heart of my friend, were not bestowed upon him, but upon the fortune, which, by the mischievous folly of young Cooper, she was led to imagine he possessed. Charmed by her affability, and misled by the complacency with which she received his attentions, my friend assured himself of having a place in her heart. His for-

* See Hetopades.

† The Goddess of Riches.

tune is not large, but he imagined it sufficient to preclude every inconvenience; and indulged himself in forming the most enchanting picture of domestick felicity. He went out this morning with an intention of imparting his scheme of happiness to her on whose approbation it was to depend. He was chagrined at hearing she was not at home: but was met at the gate, by the master of the house, who is brother-in-law to the lady, and who politely entreated him to return. How great was his surprise, on entering the apartment, to which he was led by the gentleman, to see the fair object of his passion seated beside a rich civilian, to whom fortune has made amends for the sparing boons of nature; and on whom the young Bibby smiled with the sweetest complacency. Poor Grey, stunned by this appearance, was yet more embarrassed by the distant coldness with which she returned his salutations. He did not long remain in a situation so cruelly mortifying, but casting a look of contempt on his mistress, hastily withdrew.

He was met in the anti-chamber by young Cooper, who, reading in the countenance of the rejected lover all that had passed, burst into a loud laugh. 'So, she has discovered the trick,' cried he; 'I could lay a hundred guineas, by the woeful length of your countenance, that she as found us out.' Grey, who was in no hurry to be trifled with, quickly put an end to his mirth, and forced from him an explanation of the circumstances to which he alluded. Cooper confessed to him, that the very evening on which the lady was first introduced to his acquaintance, he had mentioned him to her as the worthy possessor of *many lacks.*

Piqued at being thus made the dupe of the mischievous trick of a boy, and the scorn of an ambitious woman, he rails at the whole sex, without considering that disappointment is, most frequently, the 'fruit of the tree of our own planting.' He knew not the character of this damsel—but she was beautiful; he assured himself it must be excellent! He knew not from whom her mind had received the light of instruction—but she

danced gracefully; and he gave her credit for every accomplishment. She smiled upon him—and was it possible to doubt her discernment? The qualities which alone constitute the affectionate wife, the faithful friend, the tender mother, were the spontaneous offspring of his own impassioned fancy. Born of errour, how could they be expected to live to maturity?

This affair has given me much pain, on account of the wound it has inflicted on the feelings of my friend; and, for my own part, I grieve to find, that these lovely females of England are not totally free from imperfection!

Having just had notice of an opportunity of dispatching this packet, I hastily bring it to a conclusion.

May the errours of others teach us wisdom and while the waters of experience flow through our hearts, may they fructify and enrich the soil! The blessing of thy father rest upon thee.

What can I say more?

LETTER XI.

From the SAME, *to the* SAME.

SINCE I last held the reed that is dedicated to friendship, my soul has been tossed in the whirlwind of conflicting passions. My desires have been at variance with each other. Friendship calls me to Almora, while the insatiable thirst of curiosity, the love of knowledge and of novelty, all unite in prompting me to the hazardous undertaking of an European voyage.

Full of dangers and of difficulties as this step may appear to you, no obstacle presents itself to my view half so formidable as thy disapprobation. But why should a difference of opinion between men of sound principles cause a breach of friendship? '*The stalk of the Lotus may be broken,*

and the fibres remain connected:' and are not the fibres of affection that unite *our* hearts of a still stronger texture?

Let not the length of the voyage, or the consideration of its dangers, give any uneasiness to the breast of my friend; for 'what is too great a load for those who have strength? What is distance, to the indefatigable? What is a foreign country, to those who have science? Who is a stranger to those who have the habit of speaking kindly?'*

Every thing I have seen, every thing I have heard, since I have been in this place, has tended to create doubt and aggravate curiosity. My opinion of the morals and manners of Christians, formed upon the precepts contained in their Shaster, has been frequently staggered by the observation of practices inconsistent with its simplicity, and the knowledge of actions irreconcilable to the tenor of its precepts.

* See Hetopades, page 93.

It is true, these instances are not universal; and that by far the greater number of those with whom I converse are men who, though they have not the words of their Shaster often in their mouths, seem to have imbibed a part of its spirit in their hearts. Indeed, the extreme delicacy observed by the Christians of this place, in regard to the expression of religious sentiment, is so universal, that I do not wonder, that to such a superficial observer as Sheermaal, it should have appeared doubtful whether they really had any religion at all.

This amiable modesty, which no doubt, originates in that respect for the opinions of their Mussulman and Hindoo friends, which renders them anxious not to hurt their feeling by an opposition of sentiment, is carried to such a length, that they, who generously extol the wisdom of Zoroaster, the morality of the Koran, and the sublimity of the Veda, make no more mention of the energetick eloquence of Paul, or the beautiful simplicity of the Gospels, than if they were actually ignorant of both!

But to return to the more immediate subject of this letter. I have not determined on the important step I am about to take, without weighing well all the arguments which I thought you could adduce against it.

The loss of Cast, which to you appears so formidable, has, I confess, to me lost many of its terrours. I have made it the endeavour of my life, to act in the manner that to me appeared most conformable to the will of the omniscient Spirit, the eternal Brahma, and '*he*,' saith Krishna, '*he is my servant, he is dear to me, who is free from enmity; merciful; and exempt from pride, and selfishness: who is the same in pain, and in pleasure; patient of wrongs; contented, and whose mind is fixed on me alone.*'*

Can this Being, whose animating spirit is spread abroad over the whole universe! can he behold with displeasure the attempt of any of his creatures to explore the varied forms of being which partake of his essence?

* See Bhagvat Geeta.

Doth not this All-pervading, Life-giving soul of universal nature, reside in the piercing regions of the north, as well as in those which are favoured with the smiles of Surraya? And doth not the knowledge of his truth exalt the children of Brahma more than the descent of a thousand Avators?

Let then Maandaara rest assured, that in quitting, for a season, the favoured land of Hindostan, Zaarmilla doth nothing contrary to the spirit of our religion: and as for the censures of the bigotted and illiberal, I regard them not. 'He,' saith the Prince of Goverdhan, 'is my beloved, of whom mankind is not afraid, and who is not afraid of mankind: who is unsolicitous about events, and to whom praise and blame are as one.'*

But, in truth, from the Bramins I have little to apprehend. I have given orders, that the gifts I have so liberally bestowed may be continued; so that the accustomary Poojah may be regularly performed in my

* See Mahhabbarat.

absence; and I have sent them such reasons for my departure, as, I make no doubt, will perfectly satisfy them.

It is thou Maandaara, it is thou, that art entrusted with the hope of Zaarmilla's heart. My son! the tender pledge of the love of Prymaveda, I confide to thy care: my confidence is in thy virtue, and in the tender affection of my sister. I was a father to her tender years, shall she not be a mother to those of my child?

May the Ruler of the Devas keep thee from evil! May Vreheshpatee watch over thy dwelling, and the bountiful Lackshmi load thee with her blessings.

What can I say more?

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

34.24. — 18.28

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